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No. 200.

DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

BY HAP HAZARD.

Sad the wind is sighing—
Thro' each faint and leafless tree!
Slow the year is dying—
Under Nature's stern decree!
Snow-horn phantoms fleet—
Over ice-bound mead and moor,
Shadow-pilons beat—
Hover round his vine-draped bier!
Mournfully are swelling—
On the air, from turret near,
Moans of bells that knelling—
Knelling!—
Requiem the falling year!
O'er his senses stealing—
Death's approach glaze his eyes;
And the Old Year, reeling—
Reeling—
Totters from his throne and dies!

ONE-ARMED ALF,

The Giant Hunter of the Great Lakes;

OR,

THE MAID OF MICHIGAN.

A ROMANCE OF THE WAR OF 1812.

BY OLL COOMES.

AUTHOR OF "DEATH-NOTCH," "BOY-SPY," "OLD SOLDIER," "HAWKEYE HARRY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER V.

POINT MICHIGAN.

At the point where the Muskegon pours its waters into Lake Michigan, was located the little settlement known as Point Michigan, so called from its being situated upon a narrow point of land putting out into the lake. The place contained about a score of cabins, and numbered in all about a hundred souls. The people were of various classes and nationalities, engaged principally in hunting, trapping, and trading with the Indians and French Canadians. There were, however, a few who tilled a few acres of ground in Indian corn, for which they found ready demand at home.

At that time Point Michigan promised to be a place of great commercial interest at no distant day, but in the midst of its prosperity and infancy came the rumors of war with England. This, the settlers knew, would involve the Indians in Canada and the adjacent country around, in the struggle against them; and that all effort to hold out against the foe would be madness bordering on criminality, they all felt.

However, as the first rumor of war found its origin in no reliable quarter, the good settlers of the Point entertained hopes of its only being one of those false alarms that ever and anon thrilled along the border, striking terror to every heart.

It was near the close of the same day on which the events transpired at the cabin of One-Armed Alf, that a little group of men were assembled on the banks of the river, near the aforesaid settlement, where they could command a view of the great lake, as it lay like a sea of molten silver, reflecting back the glorious light of the fast declining sun.

They were rough, bearded men, dressed in garbs in keeping with the border, and made of buck-skin and linsey-woolsey. In spite of this rough exterior, however, there was a free, honest expression of the countenance that told of the true goodness and greatheartedness of the inner man.

They were not armed, yet all evinced no little fear and anxiety in regard to the matter which we will let their own conversation reveal.

"If the reports that have reached us are true," said Jack Eller, a bluff, outspoken, odd war-dog of some sixty years, who had seen active service in the great struggle for American independence, "a messenger from one of the exposed points will soon be jogging this way, with news that'll confirm the story. And I daresay our friend, One-Armed Alf, will not be slow in scenting out the trail of the accused hounds, and give 'em a taste of Brandywine; and I also think that if that war any foundation in the reports, Alf would have swung himself down here afore now."

"Circumstances may prevent, friend Eller," said a young man named Darcy Mayfield.

"Oh, I'll warrant he'll not stop for circumstances. He'll manage some way or other to warn us of impending danger as he has done in their past. I know Alf, boys."

"In case of actual war he might take sides with our enemies, Jack," said a companion.

"Bah, you scamp! If it weren't you, Hugh Stoner, I'd lit you a diff' for One-Armed Alf. No, sir, Stoner; he's as true to us as the Muskegon's water is to its source. A bigger and more loyal heart never pounded mortal man's ribs. But if we are to have a war with the British and the Indians, they'll find that old Jack Eller's blood of seventy-six is just as wild and hot as ever, and the sword I won at Brandywine ready to be buckled on. Or, if it need be, I can shoulder a musket, and rattle my old bones over into Canada to the tune of Yankee doodle, with the blithesome step of twenty years."

"Hark!" suddenly cried young Horace Gaskell; "what was that?"

"What was that?" interrogated Jack Eller.

"That noise; did you not hear it?"

"No, Gaskell; I heard nothing. My hearing is the only faculty that ole time has dulled; otherwise I'm as springy as a young rooster of twenty. But what did you hear, Horace?"

"A sound like the blast of a horn."

"I hope you're mistaken, Gaskell, for the sound of a horn at this time would only be a confirmation of the rumors of war, and—ah, hark, lads, hark! there goes it again."

There was no mistaking the sound this time. All heard it distinctly. It was the far-off



"See! see! don't you see the Maid of Michigan at the helm? It is the Specter Skiff!"

twang of a horn, borne faintly to their ears on the soft evening air. At first it appeared to come from the forest to the east of the village, but a repetition of the sound, which was more distinct than before, convinced them that it came from the lake to northward.

With a keen glance the little group swept the placid bosom of the lake, but not an object appeared upon it. There was, however, a headland on the opposite side of the river jutting out into the lake, which concealed a large portion of the eastern shore from view, and if the sound came from the lake at all, it must have come from behind this headland. That this was in fact the case, there was not a single doubt left in the minds of the bordermen when the horn again rung out, nearer and clearer than ever, and with such startling intonations as sent a thrill of terror through their forms.

Without a moment's hesitation old Jack Eller and Horace Gaskell sprang into a small canoe that lay upon the beach before them, and started across the river, to investigate the cause of the alarm, while the rest of the settlers hurried back to their cabins to put the village on its guard in case danger threatened them.

It required but a few minutes for Eller and young Gaskell to cross the river; and having landed and secured their canoe, they hurried around the point until they had gained an eminence from whence they could command an unobstructed view of the eastern shore of the lake as far as the eye could reach; and they had scarcely taken in the grand spectacle that was set before them when an exclamation from Gaskell drew Eller's attention to a strange sight upon the lake.

About a quarter of a league away to the northward, they beheld a tiny sail-boat coming down before the wind at a rapid pace, its speed being rapidly accelerated by a pair of oars that flashed in the setting sun, as they rose and fell like white, silvery wings. There was but a single occupant aboard the boat, and as near as they could judge he was a white man. But what appeared the most singular to our two friends was the presence of another craft of large dimensions, and flying the English colors at its mast-head, in hot pursuit of the little sail-boat. It was more than two miles away, yet our friends could see that it was a British brig carrying several guns and a crew quite adequate for its management.

"Ay! ay! that tells the story, Horace Gaskell," exclaimed Old Jack. "That pizen English flag yonder, upon Michigan's fair bosom, is all the evidence I want of there being war between our nation and the English. And I dare say, yon little craft contains a friend coming to warn us of danger—ah! there goes that horn again—it came from the little fugitive, too. Let us make ourselves visible, Horace Gaskell, and it may give him courage."

So saying the two descended the headland from amid the shrubbery that crowned it, and stood upon the beach in plain view of both the little stranger and the English vessel, and waved their caps.

Their presence appeared to be discovered at

once by the fugitive, for he immediately waved his cap in response to our friends' signal, then blew a shrill blast upon his horn.

The next instant our friends' attention was drawn to the English brig, by seeing a white cloud of smoke puff out from the prow of the vessel, then, as the sullen boom of a gun sent thunderous echoes athwart the vibrant air, a cannon ball came skimming along the surface of the lake and buried itself in the bank at their feet, dashing up a cloud of dust and dirt in their very faces.

"Fire and blazes!" roared old Jack Eller, in a sudden fit of rage and excitement; "that, Horace Gaskell, was intended as a salute for us. The bloody vipers! I'd give years of my life to board that ole scow at this minute with twelve of the boys that fit with me at Brandywine. Oh, Horace Gaskell, how we'd make the rantin' sinners blubber for mercy! But see!—the little schooner is bearin' down to'ds us now. Hurrah there, little boat," he yelled at the top of his lungs, "hurrah, ye little tiger, you'll soon be in port. By St. Peter, Horace, the little rip 's gainin' on that English lubber!"

"Hasn't the Englishman come to a dead stand?" asked young Gaskell.

"Believe it has, by Judas," responded Eller, shading his eyes with his open palm, and glancing steadily at the brig. "Oh, ho! I see into it now, Horace Gaskell; the wind has gone down all of a sudden, leaving the big lubber in the lurch. You can see their clouting sails hang limp as dish-rags. Yahl! hal! ha! The Englisher's become becalmed, or else is afraid to venture nearer to ole Jack Eller, the hero of Brandywine!"

There was some truth in old Jack's words. The English vessel had come to a dead stand. She had not taken in her sails, which was evidence of having been becalmed. The little fugitive's sails, however, had been lowered, but it did not halt. The occupant plied the oars with renewed vigor, heading directly toward the two men on the bank. Five minutes more and the sharp prow of the curiously constructed bark touched the beach at their feet.

The occupant of the craft was a young man of about five and twenty years of age, and in general appearance he was a perfect type of noble manhood. His features were of an intellectual mold, and quite prepossessing. He was habited in the uniform of a captain of the United States Army, and his movements and bearing were those of a perfect soldier. In his belt he carried a brace of pistols, while at his side was suspended a coiled tin horn by means of a cord passing over his left shoulder.

As he arose from his seat in the boat, he saluted old Jack and young Gaskell, who returned the salutation. The young captain then stepped ashore, saying as he did so:

"Have I the honor and pleasure of meeting a couple of Point Michigan settlers?"

"You have that, stranger. This lad is Horace Gaskell and I am old Jack Eller."

"Are you Major Jack Eller?" queried the stranger.

"I sport that name, or used to, down East,

soldier, having won it by hard knocks at Brandywine. Now what's your handle?"

"I am Philip St. John, captain of the Michigan Rangers, and I have come to Point Michigan to warn you settlers of a great danger that is hourly gathering around your settlement."

"War, then, has been declared between our country and England, sure enough."

"Yes; but how did you hear of it?"

"We've only had floatin' rumors of it, Captain St. John," replied old Jack, familiarly; "but if you'd never come this way, captain, that renegade cruiser yonder 'd 'a' told the hull story."

"Yes; it is one of the proofs, friends," replied the young soldier, "that war between our country and England has been inaugurated. General Hull, with over two thousand men, invaded Canada nearly two weeks ago, but he has been compelled to withdraw his forces to Detroit, upon which the English army under General Brock is slowly but surely advancing. Mackinaw is hourly threatened, and God only knows how soon it may fall. The Indians have taken sides with the British, and the horrifying news of murder and rapine will soon convulse the land. Messengers have been dispatched to every garrison and settlement on the Michigan coast, and it was my especial duty to bring the sad news to Point Michigan, and I hope you will lose no time in benefiting yourselves by it."

"God almighty bless you, Captain Phil; ole Jack Eller is not the man to let danger come upon his people unprepared. The taste that I got of British blood at Brandywine is still strong in my old spirit, and that time has toughened till I'm one of the gamest ole roosters that ever flopped wing or stuck spur. With the weight of sixty years on my ole head, I could chew a British dog up in the snap of yer eye; but I say, Cap St. John, that English cruiser give you a close rub."

"Yes; and but for the intervention of Providence in laying the wind, I would have been compelled to quit the lake and take to the woods."

"That's a smackin' little boat you've got thar, captain, I swear. Beats any thing I ever seed' plow Michigan waters; does it belong to you, Cap?"

"I can't say that it does, friend Eller," replied young St. John. "When I first took to the lake, it was in an old Indian canoe, and it was not my intention to keep it longer than I had rested from hard journeying on foot. But, in coasting along the eastern shore of the lake, I suddenly espied that boat drifting about tenantless, at the will of the wind. Seeing it was supplied with mast and sail, and supposing that it had been deserted, I resolved to take possession of it, reef sail and conclude my journey by water. I had no sooner taken possession of the little schooner and got her under way than I discovered a British brig bearing hard down upon the wind toward us. A race at once began, for I had determined to stick to the craft until the last, and for three long hours have we been running dead down on the wind."

While the young captain was narrating his adventure, Jack Eller took the opportunity to examine the little craft. It was about fifteen feet in length, sharp at stem and stern, and provided with a mainmast and sail. It was constructed upon an entirely new principle, and was a gem of workmanship, such as old Jack had never before seen. It was provided with a double pair of oars and extra canvas, and, taken altogether, it was a strange-looking craft, having an air of neatness and inviting comfort about it that puzzled Jack not a little as to who its previous owners had been, and why it had been left to go adrift on the broad waters of Michigan.

"By Judas!" he finally exclaimed, as a thought forced itself upon him: "I swear, it looks like the Specter Skiff, captain!"

"The Specter Skiff?" repeated St. John;

"what is the Specter Skiff?"

"Jist what its name implies. It's a strange little sail-boat that is seen upon the bosom of Michigan one minute, and the next it ar'n't seen—it is gone. When I fust seed you comin' down the wind, I thought it war the Specter; but when I seed a man into it instead of a woman, then I knowed it weren't the Specter."

"Then a woman mans the Specter Skiff, eh?"

"That's what some say that's been clus to her. They say she's a perfect angel, too, with big black eyes and long golden hair—a beauty and a nymph of the fust water. She's called the Maid of Michigan, and some think that she's the guardian angel of these waters, but it's only the superstitious. Men that fit at Brandywine, like me, can't be galled in sich a way. But say, Captain Philip, can't you spend the night at Point Michigan?"

"I can not, Mr. Eller, I am sorry to say. I must lose no time in returning to Mackinaw. I see the wind is rising and shifting into the south. It's already in the south-south-east, and will soon be square around. Then I can elude that British cruiser. The sun is already down, and there will be no moon until late to-morrow. I would like to go up the Muskegon and see One-Armed Alf, the Giant Scout, if I only had the time. I am satisfied he has some news that would be worth carrying to the commandant, for I understood that he intended to gain an audience, at the risk of his life, to the great council of all the chiefs of the Peninsula tribes, and learn the result of the conference."

"When was the council to be held?"

"A day or two ago."

"What at?"

"At some point in the forest east of the Ottawa village."

"It's the fust I heard of it. I presume the council war to decide whether or not they all take sides with the English in the war."

"Yes; the English were to have their Indian agent, Ensign Macklogan, there to—"

He did not finish the sentence. They were all standing with their backs to the lake, when a slight, unnatural sound, like the flap of a wing, caused them to turn suddenly toward the lake.

A cry of surprise burst from every lip.

By the blood spilt at Brandywine, Captain St. John, your craft is gone! Heaven and mystery! and it is the Specter Skiff, man! See! see!—don't you see the Maid of Michigan at the helm? Age of mystery!"

There was no denying old Jack's word. The little boat was gone from its moorings, and, with crowded sails, was seen scudding across the lake in a westerly course. Sure enough, at the helm stood the form of a young girl, whose white face was turned toward our friends, and wreathed in a pleasant smile, while her great, mournful eyes shone with the soft light of childish innocence. Her head was surmounted with a coronet of tiny shells and sparkling jewels, and from beneath this a wealth of golden hair streamed in rippling masses about her white, snowy neck and shoulders. She stood half concealed behind the belling sail, and before our friends could fully comprehend the state of things, the intervening distance blended the little sail-boat and its fair, strange occupant in one tiny white speck, as they sped onward over the broad bosom of Michigan, pursued by the English cruiser!

CHAPTER VI.

A STRANGE MESSAGE.

For a moment our three friends stood watching the receding Specter Skiff and the pursuing Englishman, completely dumbfounded. A deep hush reigned, which was not broken until distance and the gathering shadows of evening had concealed the two boats from view; and then Captain St. John was the first to speak.

"That must be your Specter Skiff, Mr. Eller," he said.

"To be sure it is, captain. There is no other proof needed," replied Eller.

"Then I have been riding in the Specter Skiff, but I would take my oath of it, that there was no other living creature, besides myself aboard the boat when I was. The girl must have been concealed in that shrubbery there, and stole aboard the craft while we stood with our backs to the lake, conversing."

"But if she is a nymph or water-spirit, as the superstitious say she is, she could go and come unseen."

"She is no spirit, Mr. Eller, I assure you; but a real being in the flesh."

"It may be, captain; but anyhow, we've the jade a perfect angel for slap-up beauty and heart-smashin' loveliness."

"She appeared extremely handsome, Jack, and henceforth I shall have a longing desire to know more about this Maid of Michigan."

"Ay, ay, captain! I see you have had a deep emotion aroused in your breast by that strange girl; and I'll admit, if I weren't an ole, broken-down war-horse, with a hide too thick for Cupid's darts, I'd prove a formidable rival of your'n in courtin' that water-nymph. But then, she's gone, and neither of us may ever see her again; so, what's the use tryin' to bottle sun-shine and spend breath about her? and as yet—"

canoe's gone, you must as well step over to the P'int and spend the night. What say you, cap'n?"

"Impossible, Mr. Eller. I must make my way back to Mackinaw, quick as possible. It is true, the loss of the boat will compel me to make the journey on foot."

"No, a bit of it, cap'n," replied old Jack; "come and go over to the P'int and you shall have the fastest horse in old Jack Eller's stable. Now come."

"I declare, Mr. Eller, I am half inclined to accept your kind offer," replied St. John.

"Then come along without further words."

The young ranger turned and at once set off with Eller and young Gaskell toward the Point.

In a few minutes they crossed the headland and reached the point where the canoe was moored. In another minute they were aboard the craft moving across the river.

"How far is it from here to the cabin of the famous scout and spy, One-Armed Alf?" asked Captain St. John, when the boat was fairly under way.

"Two or three leagues, or nearly on to that," replied old Jack. "Why so?"

"Since I will be compelled to reach Mackinaw by land, I may go past his cabin. His services are needed at Mackinaw."

"Well, it's singular that he hasn't got wind of this war, and if he has, it's more singular that he don't let us know. Must be that sumthin' goin' wrong up that way. That 'tarnal Spirit of the Woods hangs around up that way and it may be he has sent Alf across the Jordan."

"That Spirit of the Woods is quite a farce, Eller—much so as the Specter Skiff."

"I would just as soon lay the whole thing to some of your hunters as any one; or to One-Armed Alf himself."

"Ho! ho! I cap'n, you couldn't get that down me with a forty-foot pole. One-Armed Alf was never known to carry as much as a pop-gun, let alone a rifle. Why, he couldn't manage a rifle with one hand, for it takes a skillful man with two hands to shoot like that Spirit. Why, they say Alf never pulled a trigger in all his life. His hound and cane are his only companions when he's out, and the red-skins won't harm a hair of his head, for they think the Great Spirit made him without that arm that he might not lift it against them. Why, he's been known to keep and doctor a sick or wounded Indian a month, and then send him away with his best wishes; and that don't look as though he was an Indian-slayer. Besides, none but Ojibway warriors have ever been found with the bullet-hole of the avenger upon their breasts; the Ojibs appear to be his especial game. However, the Britishers may take a different view of One-Armed Alf's peaceful habits, and send him to Oanana's happy land. No, captain; the Spirit of the Woods is as tangled up an affair as the Maid of Michigan, and, besides, Captain Phil, old Jack Eller's word for it, you'll find, some day, that the Spirit of the Woods and the Maid of Michigan are one!"

"What makes you believe so?"

"The very fact that wherever a victim of the avenger is found, it is not over ten miles from the coast; and now, mark you, St. John, we'll soon hear of an Ojibway Indian being found hereabouts, shot through the heart with a tiny bullet."

"It would probably be a good thing if every Indian on the Peninsula could be found in a like state, then the English would have no one to depend on in the coming struggle."

"Well, if war we must have, old Jack Eller will make his mark, as he did at Brandywine, now mind—but say, Gaskell, just hold up that with yer paddle a little minute."

Horace Gaskell, who was paddling the canoe, at once complied with Eller's request and the boat came to a stand. Both he and the young officer were about to inquire the cause of Eller's sudden request, when they saw his eyes fixed upon a solitary green leaf floating on the surface of the river.

Why such an insignificant object should hold the old borderman's attention so closely, completely puzzled his companions, and before either of them could make any inquiry into the matter, the leaf had floated within arm's length of the canoe and the old man reached out and picked it up. He then examined it closely and carefully and his companions saw his eyes dilate, his lips part and his breath come quick and hard, as though some terrible emotion convulsed his whole frame.

"What now, Mr. Eller? what now?" questioned the young captain.

"What now?" the old frontiersman exclaimed, his face becoming set with a firm, rigid expression; "why, I have a message from One-Armed Alf!"

"A message, did you say?"

"Yes, a message from the Giant Scout, and may God have mercy upon the soldiers of the Peninsula. There it is, captain—written upon an oak leaf. Look upon it—read it for yourself."

As he concluded, the old borderman drew from his pocket a small memorandum-book, which he opened, and then upon one of its white pages he laid the green oak leaf just plucked from the waves of the Muskegon.

Then Captain St. John read the startling message that caused a groan to escape from his lips.

CHAPTER VII. THE MESSAGE.

This strange message which old Jack Eller handed to Captain St. John to read, was indeed written upon an oak leaf, the letters having been cut or pricked with a sharp-pointed instrument, and when laid upon the white page of Eller's memorandum, each letter showed plain and distinct in white with but little irregularities where the point of the instrument had crossed the fibrous veins of the leaf. It read:

"I am surrounded. Haste the news. Mackinaw to fall in two days!"

"This Captain St. John read aloud.

"That's what it says, cap'n," added old Jack. "My God! then all will be lost!" cried St. John; "I can never reach the garrison in time to warn them of their danger, and they'll not be expecting an attack so soon. I hope this message may prove to be a mistake."

"Nay, nay, Cap'n," replied Eller; "One-Armed Alf is never mistaken in these matters. Healers makes sure before he speaks. His way of finding out facts is a mystery to me and every one else, but be that as it may, it's sure, every pop. This way of communication leaves carried down by the current, is not new with the scout. He does it whenever he wants to tell us how things are goin', and yet don't want to be seen in these dignified. I dare say, there's a hundred leaves just like this one floatin' on the Muskegon at this minute. You see the object pass without being seen, and by another will. It's an original idea with One-Armed Alf, and a good 'un too, for who, unless he was in the secret, would pay any attention to a few leaves floatin' on the bosom of the river that traverses a hundred miles of forest? Ay, Cap'n, a bigger and nobler heart never pounded human ribs than that of that identical, One-Armed Alf."

"But he must be in 'trouble himself, Eller, for he says he's surrounded," said Horace Gaskell. "He must be surrounded by savages."

"It must be so, Horace; and as men, we stand in duty bound to hasten at once to his assistance. If you can carry, Captain St. John, until we can get the scout out of his trouble, I'll raise half a dozen men to escort you to Mackinaw, for it'll not be safe for you to start alone."

"I am much obliged to you for your kind consideration and promise; but, perhaps I am more able to make the journey alone than you are to spare the men from Point Michigan."

"Nay, nay, Cap'n; we'll have to pull up and strike out for Chicago or Detroit at once. We can make no defense here against the Indians now. If it weren't for that cursed British cruiser we could take to the lake and reach Mackinaw in a little while. But, pull hard for shore, Gaskell, and let's make every minute count."

Gaskell plied the paddle vigorously, and in a few minutes the opposite shore was reached. Having landed, the three proceeded to the quarters of Jack Eller, where the settlers were all summoned and the state of affairs made known.

For awhile excitement ran high, but when quiet was again restored, preparations were at once made to go to the assistance of One-Armed Alf.

Old Jack Eller, whose age and experience fitted him for the position, stood at the head of the military department of the little village. His judgment, in fact, on all points could be relied upon, despite his bluntness and recklessness of character. At heart he was an honest and straightforward man, and what was lacking in education was made up in instinct and years of experience.

From the settlers he selected four young men who readily assented to accompany him to the cabin of One-Armed Alf, and from thence to Mackinaw with Captain St. John, and, who at once prepared themselves for the journey.

One of the four, whom Eller introduced to St. John as Darcy Mayfield, was a man about the captain's own age, and whose general appearance struck St. John as being decidedly remarkable. He possessed a form, noble and commanding, and features that were strong, open and manly in expression. His eyes of a dark blue, shone with the light of intelligence and honesty, and his mouth and fine-curved lips bore evidence of great firmness and decision of character. The hair was of a dark brown, and strange as it may appear, was thickly sprinkled with threads of silver. His premature grayness St. John knew was not the result of illness nor feeble health, for his physique was strong and robust. But there was a faint softness of his voice, a firm compression of the lips, and a strange, wild vacancy of the eye that told of an aching, troubled heart. Nevertheless, he was a man calculated to win friends at first sight, for there was that about his looks, address and deportment that not only invoked friendship and admiration, but a feeling of silent sympathy.

"It is the fact then, Captain St. John," Mayfield said, after being introduced, "that we are upon the eve of a terrible war?"

"Yes; such is the case, Mr. Mayfield, I regret to say; and there is no possible chance of evading it now."

"Have the armies of England and America met in battle yet?"

"Not that I know of. General Hull, however, began the invasion of Canada several days ago, and it may be that a hard battle has been fought between him and Proctor. Mackinaw, I just learned, is threatened, and should it fall, God only knows what will follow."

"Are there women and children at Mackinaw?" asked Darcy.

"Yes; there are over fifty women and children—officers' and soldiers' families."

"Have you relations there, Mr. Mayfield, but—"

"I understand, captain, what you would say," interrupted Mayfield; "that tell-tale bluish speaks plain as words. I pray Heaven, captain, that your life may not be blighted like mine has been by the ruthless hand of the savage. And as we are likely to be companions for awhile at least, let me tell you that I will show no Indian, especially an Ojibway, mercy, even after he is down. I hate them, curse them, worse than I hate a serpent!" and the man's eyes fairly blazed with the fire of indignation, stirred within him. "Yes," he continued, "I hate them! They have made a perfect devil of me toward them, and I take more delight in slaying them than in any thing else on earth. I make it a point to hunt them down like deer, and even now I am impatient to be off upon their trail. I know it is a fearful passion for one to let remain in his breast; but I dare say, captain, it would be even so with you should you, when you return to Mackinaw, find that she, upon whom you have ever loved, and for whose love and future happiness, had been cruelly murdered or carried away to a fate worse than death by the savages. Yes, I repeat it, captain, it would make a demon of you toward those accursed barbarians!"

Before Captain St. John could make reply Jack Eller made his appearance and announced all in readiness for immediate departure to the assistance of the Giant Scout. The captain had, however, heard enough to satisfy him of one thing: Darcy Mayfield was the terrible avenger—the Spirit of the Woods.

As all were anxious to be off, the little party, including St. John, too, their departure up the river. By this time it was dark and in the forest the shadows were black and desolate; still, under the guidance of Darcy Mayfield, the little party moved on quite rapidly. They journeyed in silence, although it was all the guide could do to keep bluff old Jack Eller quiet, his blood having been aroused to a Brandywine heat.

As they neared the lonely cabin of the Giant Scout the gloom seemed to thicken around them, and they stopped to listen for some sound that might aid in directing their course, but all was silent as the grave, save that weird, solemn moan of the wilderness and the gentle murmur of the Muskegon hard by. The deep hush of all animated nature was a foreboding element, full of meaning and significance to the trained borderman.

At length, when all was ready to resume the journey, Darcy Mayfield said:

"Let each one now observe the greatest precaution, for, if our friend Alf is in danger, the first indication of our approach may precipitate affairs."

"Ugh—humph," ejaculated Old Jack, with closed lips.

The party moved on a short distance and again came to a halt by direction of their guide.

"How far are we from the scout's cabin?" asked one of the party, growing impatient.

"Hist!" commanded young Mayfield, and his form seemed to rise up in colossal proportions before those who now bent their eyes upon him through the darkness.

A deep silence reigned.

Then there is heard a sound like the snap of a dry twig close by, followed by the quick soft fluttering of feet and the rush of a body through a clump of adjacent undergrowth.

The figure before our friends had suddenly vanished—they saw that their guide, Darcy Mayfield, was gone!

"Partition take the furries," blurted Old Jack

Eller. "Darcy has gone—shot away from us like a dart. What can he mean by such tarmal actions? I tell you, men, that boy acts like he war teetotally decombated sometimes."

"Like he was what?" asked Paul Engle.

"Why, you numbskull, don't you understand the English language. It means mad—I believe Darcy goes mad whenever he gets into the atmosphere of an Ojibway."

"Yes; and I dare say," added Captain St. John, "that when you find out the real truth of the matter you'll find he is the reputed Spirit of the Woods."

"Oh, Judas!" exclaimed Old Jack; "such a thing is impossible!"

"Is the bore of his rifle large or small?" asked St. John.

"Small, captain, small," said Paul Engle; "there's not a rifle in the settlement that takes as small a bullet as Darcy's."

"Then that is almost positive proof of his being the Spirit," said the captain.

"I can't believe," said Old Jack, "but—harkee!"

The sharp, yet delicate intonations of a rifle came to the ears of the party. It came from the direction in which Mayfield had gone. All listened intently, but the report of the piece was succeeded by a profound silence.

For some time our friends stood wrapt in silence and doubt. They were afraid to move on lest Mayfield would be unable to find them again in the darkness.

Several minutes had been spent in speculating over their situation, when they were suddenly startled by a light, soft thread which could be faintly heard approaching from the river quite rapidly.

With bated breath and eyes distended, our friends peered into the gloom, out of which they suddenly saw a dark figure—a mere density of shadows—float. It appeared to be crawling, or rather floating parallel with the earth's surface, and behind it could be seen the merest speck of dull, blue fire, which in no way could be accounted for, and which filled our friends with emotions of sudden fear and surprise.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 199.)

Gentleman George:

OR,
PARLOR, PRISON, STAGE AND STREET.
A STRANGE ROMANCE OF NEW YORK LIFE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

AUTHOR OF "THE MAN-FROM-TEXAS," "MAD DETECTIVE," "ROCKY MOUNTAIN BOY," "WOLF DRUM," "OVERLAND KID," "RED MAZEPPA," "AGE OF SPADES," "HEART OF FIRE," ETC.

CHAPTER XV.

NEIL JEMMISON.

A QUARTER TO eight, and the large and magnificent theater known as Niblo's Garden was two-thirds full, and the people were still pouring into it.

One of the managers—a dapper, plump, jolly-looking gentleman with a blonde mustache—and Miss Desmond's business agent, Medham, stood near the bouquet-stand, in the front lobby.

They are coming in pretty fast," Medham remarked, with a look at his watch; "it wants a quarter to eighting-up."

"Yes; we've got 'em," the manager replied, complacently, carefully twisting the ends of his well-waxed mustache. "Friday night is a bad night, too; we'll have a house to-morrow night that will make you open your eyes. This is a little different from playing in the Western barns which they call opera-houses, isn't it?"

"Yes, rather."

"We get a house here it means twelve hundred to two thousand dollars. Hallo, there's the Judge—Bruyn, you know; I introduced you to him the other night."

The Judge, with a party of three gentlemen, attended by a colored servant, was just at that moment passing through the lobby on his way to the private box that he had taken for "Miss Desmond's nights," to use the booking term.

The colored servant carried a large bundle, wrapped up in white paper, carefully in his hands.

"Bouquets," said the manager, with a laugh, referring to the parcel that the colored servant bore; "the Judge is a great theater-goer, but I never saw him so interested before. Medham, my boy"—and the manager patted him softly on the back—"there's nothing like a pretty woman to fetch 'em; talent is all very well, but if talent is ugly, talent won't draw, and we run theaters to make money."

And then the manager paused in his observations to bow to an olive-faced, well-built gentleman, dressed entirely in black, who came just at that moment.

"Hallo, who's that?" exclaimed Medham, attracted at once by the stranger. "He looks like a cross between a Spanish prince and a leading tragedian."

"Do you notice what a remarkable resemblance he bears to the pictures of the Napoleon family?" asked the manager, replying to one question by asking another.

"Yes; that is what suggested the Spanish prince; he looks too dandified to suit my ideas of a Frenchman."

He's a wealthy New Yorker—lives up-town somewhere; I met him first, years ago, in Paris, across the water. He was studying medicine then."

"Oh, a doctor?"

"Yes, but he doesn't practice, I believe; he's enormously wealthy; an uncle died and left him a California gold mine; I heard the story long time ago."

"What's his name?"

"Neil Jemmison."

And leaving the manager and the agent of the "star" to watch the people coming into the theater, and to speculate as to how much money they would take that night, we will follow the dark-faced stranger, who moved amid the butterflies of fashions, the daintily-dressed young gentlemen with roses in their button-holes and carefully-oiled locks parted in the center—like a very king; not one by accident of birth, but one of the brawny-sinewed rulers of the olden time, who clutched their scepter with the strong arm and maintained it by dint of might, backed by a cunning brain.

Down along the right-hand lobby Neil Jemmison sauntered, until he came to the third door from the stage. Being open, it commanded both a view of the stage and the vast auditorium, now a sea of heads.

The orchestra had just commenced their overture, and the curtain had not yet risen.

Jemmison leaned against the side of the door and listlessly surveyed the "house." We use the term in its theatrical sense, meaning, not the building, but the people in it.

And as Jemmison—the inheritor of the California gold mine, as the chatty manager characterized it—leaned against the side of the door, cold and calm as an iceberg, two short-haired, bullet-headed young men in the lower circle opposite, dressed rather flashily and evidently in the theater strictly on business—in the pickpocket line—and not for amusement, caught sight of the tall, lithe figure framed in the open doorway.

"Oh, Bob!" cried one to the other, nudging him with the elbow, "if there ain't the 'Doctor' an' dressed like a sport!"

The other took a good look and became satisfied that the dark-faced gentleman in the doorway was indeed the man who, in the slums of the East Side, had been known as "The Doctor."

"I guess that he's here on business too," and then the second night-bird grinned at the first.

The sharp eyes of the two representatives from Water street had detected the truth. Neil Jemmison and the Doctor were one.

The overture ended—the curtain rose.

Jemmison, like the rest of the audience, turned his attention to the stage.

The play progressed, the story began to slowly unfold itself, and then, after due preparation, the "star of the evening" made her appearance—habited as an Indian girl, a daughter of the great Comanche nation—to a wild burst of music from the orchestra.

A "round" of applause came from the vast audience and half a dozen bouquets fell at her feet—one elegant bouquet, in particular, coming from the box on the left, occupied by Judge Bruyn and his friends.

The actress bowed her thanks, gathered up her floral trophies, and the play proceeded.

Jemmison, who had sauntered into the theater for an hour's amusement, not knowing what was to be played or who was to play it, had listened to the opening dialogue in his careless, listless way, but on the appearance of Miss Ellen Desmond his manner had undergone a wonderful change.

At first he had started and stared at the stage, and all the time that the vast audience were applauding and the actress was bowing her thanks, picking up her bouquets and depositing them on the table whereon reposed the buffalo-tongue, the supposed product of the young Indian girl's rifle, he had been rubbing his eyes and staring at the beautiful girl with her long raven tresses; Miss Desmond wore an "Indian wig" over her own fair locks to carry out the idea of the daughter of the prairie.

"By Heaven! it is the woman, or else I am going mad!" he muttered, between his firm-set teeth. "But her hair was not as dark as that, nor so long."

Then the thought of the stage disguises came to him.

"Oh, what a fool I am; it is a wig she wears; her own brown tresses are underneath. The man who would put such a strange incident as this into a novel would be laughed at, and yet it is reality. The woman that I have searched for amid all the low haunts of crime in this great city—whom I imagined that I would find, poor, depraved, a wreck of what she formerly was, flashes before me on the stage of one of the leading theaters of New York, the star of the night—the magnet which has drawn a couple of thousand people together, more beautiful, younger looking—more fascinating, more dangerous than when I first met her, some twenty years ago!"

And, by the time Jemmison had come to the end of his unspoken speech, the actress opened her mouth and spoke.

If the "Doctor" had been astonished at the sight of the young and beautiful Miss Desmond, he was no less surprised when the tones of her voice fell upon his ears.

Again he stared blankly at the stage, then he passed his hand over his forehead and endeavored to call back the sound of the voice of the woman, who, twenty years ago, had been to him as the guardian-angel who held ajar the gates of Paradise.

The face astonished him and the voice perplexed him.

The face was familiar to him; he would have recognized it among a thousand, but the voice—if he had heard it coming from an adjoining apartment and had not seen the speaker, he would willingly have sworn that the owner of the voice was a stranger to him.

"What can this mean?" he muttered, in agitation. "Am I mad or dreaming?"

CHAPTER XVI. THE ROSEBUD.

THE speech of the Indian girl was ended; it was a "tiding" speech—stage parlance again—full of flowers, freedom—and bathos. Again the audience had signified appreciation of that sort of thing coming from a pretty woman.

Jemmison was in a maze; clear, cool-headed fellow that he was, his brain was in a whirl.

Again he looked upon the sweet, fresh young face of the actress—an Indian girl, white as pearly water-lily; such little inconsistencies are the charm of the drama—and as he looked he was sure that it was the face of the woman who had pillored her head upon his breast, who had been the mother of his child, but who had wedded herself to evil, and plunging into the world, had disappeared beneath the great life-tide as suddenly and completely as the poor wretch who seeks the dark waters of the rolling wave to find forgetfulness and rest.

But when she spoke, his heart answered not to the voice; it was the tones of a stranger that he listened to.

"Years change voices as well as faces," he muttered. "Time, that has spared her angel-face, may have worked its will upon her voice, and yet, the voice of this woman is like liquid music. So, too, Lina's voice was pleasant to the ear, but far less strong, and with a different ring to this one."

Intently Jemmison watched the progress of the play. Every look, every action of the woman he recognized, and when, finally, during the course of the scene, she withdrew herself from the embrace of her lover, the gallant young American gold-hunter—represented by a mature gentleman of forty, with the obesity of an inn-keeper, and a voice like the roar of a bass-drum—Jemmison remembered how often in the old time, before the wedding-ring had spanned her finger, she had acted in a like manner with him. The coyness was acting then, as now, and the dark-faced man ground his teeth violently as the thought came to him.

When she was silent he was sure that the actress, Ellen Desmond, was the woman whom he had known, years before, as Lina Atton; but when she spoke, he doubted.

The end of the scene came, and the actress disappeared—amid a burst of applause, as usual.

Then, losing all interest in the mimic scene, Neil Jemmison cast his eyes to the floor and meditated.

"Is it, or is it not?" he muttered; like all men who are solitary in their musing, Jemmison communed much with himself. "Shall I satisfy my curiosity, or now that I am almost certain that I am face to face with the woman that I have sought, shall I pause and not convince myself?"

Long he pondered over the question, but at last he decided.

"I'll satisfy myself," he said, shutting his lips firmly together. "Teaching, thorough culture may have produced the change in the voice; besides, sometimes the voice in singing sounds altogether different from the same in speaking; it may be the same effect here. I will get nearer the stage; perhaps I shall be able to decide, if I am close to the footlights."

Jemmison left his position by the door and walked through the lobby until he came to the

door nearest to the stage. Opening it, he found that he was within some twenty feet of the magic circle of lights which guarded the realm of the buskined queen.

Four or five young men, elaborately "gelled up" with flowers, kids and perfumery, were gathered in a little knot just inside the door.

Jemmison, tall and stately, clad in complete black, leaning carelessly against the side of the doorway, appeared like a prince surrounded by a train of bowing courtiers.

Standing as Jemmison did, he could not help overhearing the conversation of the knowing young gentlemen who comprised the group.

"Say, Fred, did you see that bouquet that the Judge threw the little girl?" asked one of the young men, addressing the one next to him.

"I bet you!" replied the other, languidly. "It must have cost ten dollars if it cost a cent. Hang it! what chance can we fellows stand, if a swell like old Bruyn is going to enter for the race? He owns about a dozen bucks. I tell you what, fellows, this chicken don't throw away any more stamps on bouquets while that old monster over there is around."

By this time Miss Desmond was on the stage again, and Jemmison, looking over the box opposite, attracted by the conversation that he had overheard, could not help noting how visibly Nicholas Bruyn seemed to be impressed by the looks or talents—or both combined—of the actress. And, watching the stage closely, too, as well as the occupants of the box, Jemmison, old theater-goer as he was, could not help noticing that the pretty actress played more directly to the private box than she did to the audience in front.

"Is it possible that she has fascinated a man like Bruyn?" Jemmison asked, again communing with himself. The Judge, as well known to Jemmison. He knew his iron nature, and wondered that any woman could cast a spell over him. "It is such women as this fair-faced demon that make men ruin themselves, and then laugh at the mischief they have wrought."

Closely and carefully Jemmison watched the stage until the tableau at the end of the first act came, and the curtain descended. Then he went to the stand in the front lobby and procured an opera glass.

"This may enable me to penetrate the illusions that art has cast around her, and to decide whether she is the woman that I think she is or not," he muttered, as he sauntered along through the lobby to his old position.

Regaining his former station, he pondered over the memory of the past.

"If it were not for the child, I would let the woman go," he murmured; "but I can not forget the child. I must learn whether it is living or dead. True, I have this poor little wretch that I have picked out of the gutter as it were, but still I can not be satisfied until I learn the fate of the other."

The music ended, the curtain rose on the second act. First came a long scene between the villain of the play, the Spanish commandante, and the guile

ent front the usual run of gentlemen who besiege the back-door to see favorite actresses, and civilly replied that it was not possible.

"Will a five-dollar bill aid me in any way?" Jemmission inquired. "I thought that I recognized the lady from the front of the theater, and I should like to satisfy myself whether she is really the person I think she is or not."

"It's no use my taking your money, sir," the door-keeper said, honestly. "If I were to let you go inside, you would only be turned out by the first person you met, for they would detect in an instant that you were a stranger. It would cost me my situation, too, and without doing you any good. You couldn't see Miss Desmond even if you were inside. She's in the dressing-room, now, and after she is dressed she will go right home in her carriage."

"Is that her carriage standing outside?" Jemmission asked.

"Yes, sir."

"I am much obliged for this information."

"Not at all, sir," replied the door-keeper, civilly, and then Jemmission retired.

Outside the door, he took up a position on the curbstone near the carriage, a little apart from the knot of loungers who were watching the door.

The people concerned on the stage began to issue from the back-door, and depart for their homes.

First came the scene-shifters and "fly-men"—the workmen who attend to the borders suspended over the stage, representing the sky, drapery, etc.; after them came the supernumeraries—the ambitious young gentlemen who seek, in a lowly way, to gain some knowledge of the histrionic art; then the ladies of the corps de ballet, one by one and two by two, ill-dressed and badly dressed, hurrying to their humble homes; then the prominent people, the actors and actresses, began to come forth; their dresses, being more elaborate, required more time for their removal.

Full twenty minutes Jemmission had waited and yet saw no signs of Miss Desmond, but the carriage still remained.

"As long as that stays I am safe to wait," the watcher reflected, as he noted the dark forms emerging from the door by one. "Naturally it will take her some time to dress; a half an hour is not too long a time to allow."

And just as Jemmission had made up his mind that it would be fully ten minutes more before the woman would come for whom he waited, a bright, sharp-looking lad came out of the back-door, went up to the driver of the carriage and said something to him in a low tone, and then went back again into the theater.

The man on the box of the carriage took up his reins, whistled to his horse and drove off up the street.

Jemmission was somewhat astonished at this movement.

"She will not use the carriage to-night then," he muttered; "that is strange. Can it be possible that she has discovered, in some way, that I am here, and thus seeks to throw me off the scent? By Heaven! I am sure now that she is the woman; Ellen Desmond is Lina Aton!"

Then a sudden thought occurred to him.

"Perhaps she has ordered the carriage round to the front of the theater!" he exclaimed; "that is easily ascertained!"

So, without loss of time, Jemmission hurried round to Broadway.

Two or three carriages stood in front of the hotel and near to the entrance of the theater, but a single glance told Jemmission that the vehicle he sought was not among them; all were two-horse coaches; the modest little one-horse coupe of the actress was not there.

"I am outwitted!" Jemmission muttered, as he stood in front of the now dark and desolate theater entrance; "but, the very precaution that she has taken to avoid me proves that my suspicion is correct. She is the woman that I think she is. The whole proceeding is strange; she must have discovered that I was in front of the house and anticipated that I would discover her and lay in wait for her. I swore to her once that if she ever played me false, I would kill her with as little mercy as though she was a snake coiled in my path with head upraised to strike. Perhaps she remembers my words and fears that I will attempt to make them good," and, as he spoke, Jemmission laughed bitterly to himself.

His meditations were disturbed by the irruption of some half a dozen young men from the saloon attached to the hotel. They gathered on the pavement right in front of him, and Jemmission discovered that it was the same party who had sat in front of him in the theater.

It was plainly evident the young men had been drinking more strong liquor than was good for them, and that their weak heads were now in a sad state.

"I am done for, Gus!" exclaimed one of them, who seemed to be a sort of leading spirit, and who was elaborately attired in a costume of which a light yellow overcoat and a red necktie were the leading features. "My goose is cooked!"

The tone of the gentleman with the red necktie was despairing in the extreme.

"But is it a sure 'buff fact, Fred?' demanded another, who was endeavoring to steady himself by the aid of a cane about as big round as a lead-pencil.

"You can bet stamps on it!" replied the first speaker, emphatically.

"Oh, I loved her and she might have been the happiest in the land."

But she ran away with Bryn the lawyer, who came with a German band," howled the youth, discordantly and disconsolately.

The name of Bryn attracted Jemmission's attention to the muddled utterances of the devotee of fashion.

"Who saw her go, anyway?" asked another of the party, who was holding up the bill-board in front of the saloon with the small of his back, and who, by this simple device was enabled to preserve a very upright carriage.

"I saw it, myself," said the red necktie gentleman. "I came to the door here, after that first cocktail, while you fellows were chinnin' it inside, and I saw old Bryn and Palmer talking together, and then Mediam—that's Miss Desmond's agent you know—came out and joined them. I heard him say, 'Wait a minute, she's nearly dressed,' and then he went in again. Oh, gents, when I heard that, and saw that old thief of a lawyer waiting for the woman that I was willing to lavish all my salary on, I felt as if I would have liked to punch his head for him. I stood right here, gents, and saw the woman that I adored get into a carriage with Bryn and Palmer, and that sneak of a business-agent who promised me an introduction to her, and saw 'em go off—heard old Bryn tell the coachman to drive 'em to the Maison Doree."

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 100.)

A PARIS paper tells an amusing anecdote about Lafayette. At Lamrue's funeral the crowd took out the General's horses, as he was returning home, and drew him to his hotel. "You must have been very much pleased," remarked a friend, some time afterward. "Very much pleased, indeed," replied Lafayette; "but I never saw any thing more of my horses."

MY HUSBAND.

What man is this I must obey;
What when I'd go, out bid me stay,
And to my Yes—over my Ray?

My Husband!
What one is this whose lordly soul
Is so impatient of control,
Lest his dear liberty be stole?

My Husband!
Who is it frowns when bills come in,
And swears it is a shameful sin—
Through me he'll soon be ruin's twin?

My Husband!
When I feel cold, who's ever warm,
And thinks a draught can do no harm—
Thus always calling me alarm?

My Husband!
And when my bones all ache with pain,
For which some noot rum I obtain,
Who calls me foolish, crazed, insane?

My Husband!
Who is it thinks his angry brow
Must find an answering smile somehow,
Temper in me he'll never allow?

My Husband!
And yet, who is it I love so,
That if he bid me stay, not go,
I change my Yes to suit his No?

My Husband!
What tho' he frowns when bills appear,
Who buys the best for me to wear,
To please me well, his greatest care?

My Husband!
And when I'm sick, tho' he can't nurse,
Who's ever ready with his purse,
And trembles lest I should grow worse?

My Husband!
What though his anger sometimes rise—
Who keeps me for his loving eyes,
And shares with me both smiles and sighs?

My Husband!
Who such unexpected power can wield,
To which I lend submission yield,
With his strong heart for ever my shield?

My Husband!
Who is my sovereign here on earth—
Despite whose faults, is fairly worth,
The fondest love that e'er had birth?

My Husband!

NADIA.

THE RUSSIAN SPY;

The Brothers of the Starry Cross.

BY CAPT. FREDERICK WHITTAKER,
AUTHOR OF "THE RED RAJA," "THE SEA OAT," "THE
BLACK RIDER," "DOUBLED-DEATH," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE OUTPOSTS.

The English pickets were indeed passed; and before the comrades lay a level plateau, about a quarter of a mile in breadth, bordered by precipitous ravines, a sort of isthmus, that connected the ground occupied by the Allies with the open country beyond the Tchernaya.

"Noo, Peesho," said the piper, in a low voice; "ye ken we're in a bad place gin we coom across the Rooshians; and we'll coom on them pretty soon. Be ready to drap, mon. We'll be at the Tchernaya in anither half-hour. Ye ken it rias into the harbor."

"Ziens, mon, broos," said Pichot, halting. "Where are we going, and what are we to do? We are all free now."

"We're jist bound for the Rooshian pickets, whatever they may be," said Sandy; "and once there we'll luke out to tak' a prisoner that kens something. Peesho, ye ken we Highlanders are said to ha'e the geest of second sight—it's what yer Frenchers call *clairvoyance*, ye ken—and I canna get it out of my mind that I ha'e seen that bonny ledly ower here. I's awa' till I find her."

Pichot stopped his companion as he was going on.

"Monsieur McPherson," he said, gravely, "is it possible that you have come out here on a fancy like that?"

Sandy turned on him peevishly.

"Hoot awa', mon, ye want to ken sae thing a body kens. Weel, if ye maun ken, I ha'e grace reason to suspicion that the bonny ledly's a Rooshian spy, and that she kens her ilka nicht. I ha'e seen her. Noo, will ye gang wi' me?"

"I will," said the Zouave, reassured.

Then the two plodded on through the darkness over the neck of land, without guessing a soul, and finally stood on the edge of the steep descent that led down to the river Tchernaya.

"Dooon, mon, doon, and creep over the ridge like a snake," said Sandy, in a whisper. "Gin there's Rooshians here, they'll see us against the sky line."

Both dropped on their faces, then crawled slowly to the edge of the declivity, and looked over. Below them, in a deep valley, the white gleam of water and the audible wash of the current showed where the river lay.

Both strained their eyes in vain to find any sign of human occupancy. The Tchernaya valley was empty.

By mutual consent both men crawled over the edge and some little distance down the declivity before they ventured to rise, and only then behind the shelter of a thicket.

Then they stole cautiously down toward the bridge that they knew crossed the river. A regular road ran down to it, and they crept cautiously along in the ditch beside it, stopping to listen at every few steps.

Silent as every thing was, they were not fool enough to believe that the place was therefore empty.

The outpost of an army are not wont to make much noise.

Presently they were in the ditch, at the side of the road next to the bridge; and, by stooping low down, brought the outline of the picturesque stone structure partly against the sky line.

The piper pinched the Zouave's arm and pointed.

The dim outline of a Cossack on guard, with his long spear upright in the air, occupied the summit of the arch.

The vidette was looking straight before him, with the stolid air peculiar to the mechanical Russian soldier. He had evidently neither seen nor heard them.

Without a word Sandy and Pichot stole forward, still down the course of the side ditch, till they had put the abutments of the old stone bridge between them and the Cossack. The bridge was an old single-arched affair, where the roadway in the center necessarily rose high above the extremities; and thus, on a dark night, a person by the abutments was quite out of sight.

In a minute more the Scot and the Zouave stood on the banks of the little river, under the arch itself, for the long dry season had lowered the water considerably.

They did not dare to speak now. It would not do to presume too far on the stolidity of the Cossack.

Sandy pointed across the stream, and Pichot nodded. The Scot was just about to wade in, when he heard the hoofs of a horse coming at a slow trot over the stony road at the other side. Instantly both halted and stole back to the edge of the abutment to listen.

The approaching horseman had roused the Cossack. They could hear the tramp of his pony's feet as he wheeled around to confront the new-comer.

"It's the sergeant on his rounds, belike," said the piper, in a whisper. "Noo, gin we only understood the lingo, Peesho, we might find the countersign and walk in like gentlemen."

In a moment more the hoarse voice of the vidette was heard hailing, and the approaching horseman pulled up and answered.

The Cossack spoke again, and seemed to be repeating some directions to the other, for he spoke some time.

Then the strange horseman called out, as he rode on:

"*Churasho!*" (All right.)

The Cossack on the bridge seemed to think that it was by no means all right, however, for they could hear him shouting to the other in a warning tone, and at the same time came the ominous click of a pistol-lock.

The strange horseman, despite all, rode boldly down to the bridge, and then suddenly wheeled round and dashed into the river at the left of the bridge. Instantly, with a furious malediction, the Cossack dashed to the parapet of the bridge and fired his pistol at the other.

Sandy uttered a low exclamation of surprise. He had recognized in the figure in the water the low bear-skin shako and hanging jacket of a French chasseur, for even in that darkness the scarlet trousers were conspicuous.

"It's one of our ain officers, Peesho," he whispered, excitedly. "Belike he's been out on the same errand as yersel', mon. We maun let the Rooshian kill him."

The piper drew his revolver as he spoke, and watched the figure of the Cossack on the bridge.

The officer in the water appeared not to have been hit, for he kept on his course across the stream without faltering; his horse being almost swimming deep by this time.

The Cossack, swearing away in Russian, galloped around to the further bank of the river, passing within four feet of the two crouching comrades without seeing them under the shadow of the abutment, and rode down to the water's edge to intercept the stranger.

Then Sandy and the Zouave rose, as if with one impulse, and suddenly rushed at the unwary vidette. In a single bound the athletic Highlander was alongside, as the Cossack halted by the river. The next moment his shaggy arm was round the other's throat, and he bore him backward from the saddle in the scientific manner of a professional garrotter. In the very action Pichot seized him on the other side, and flourishing his sword bayonet ferociously, compelled silence from the astonished and terrified man.

"Cut his weans and gin he says a word," said the piper, rapidly, as he turned to watch the man in the river. "I'm curious to know what you gay callant may be."

In the middle of the stream, the gayly-uniformed horseman had halted, and now seemed undecided whether to advance or retreat.

"I thoct sae muckle," growled Sandy, savagely, as he eyed the other with great disgust. "Yon's a spy, coming to rin oor guard as a French officer. Noo lat's see gin he will."

The Highlander ran round, and in a twinkling was on the bridge and over the middle of the arch. He knew full well that there was danger, for the rest of the chain of videttes must be near; but he was resolved to capture this mysterious stranger, if possible.

Over the middle of the arch he leaped, pistol in hand, and spoke in a low voice:

"Surrender, ye traitor tyke, or I'll riddle ye wi' bullets."

For answer the strange officer suddenly made his horse leap forward in the water, when he disappeared under the bridge. Just as he did it Sandy fired, and felt convinced that he had struck the horse, for he heard a great splashing below.

Then he also heard a distant shouting, and the swift gallop of a horse on the Russian side of the river.

"We ha'e rousit the peckets, anyway," he muttered, as he turned discontentedly away; "and gin I'm no muckle mista'en we'll see something, noo."

He ran down the bridge to where he had left his comrade with the Cossack, and found that the latter had already bound and gagged his victim with his own belts. Then, seeing that the man in the river had reached the Russian shore, the piper did not fire again, but turned his attention to his own safety.

Dealing the Cossack's docile pony a cut with the Cossack's own whip, that sent it galloping away, the two comrades scrambled up the bank into a thicket, just as the tramp of horses came near.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE POLICE RY.

The village of Beloi Gorod was a representative Russian village, in the midst of a dead flat, many miles in extent, surrounded by struggling forests, dotted with a few huts, in the midst of which stood the village fields around the village itself.

The houses were all long and low, with black thatched roofs, each in its own little garden, along the single street that composes the breathing space of the village, with a circular green in the center. A strong stockade ran round the whole place, so as to make it a complete fortification, not against man, but against the innumerable wolves that infest all Russia.

Gorloff, in his disguise, drove in at the open gate of the village, and was welcomed with effusion by the hospitable peasants, who crowded round to buy of him, and to proffer the shelter that was needed from the night fast approaching.

Gorloff played his part well; and after selling out a great part of his stock at prices that astonished the peasants from their cheapness, accepted the hospitality of the elder of the village, old Michael Ivanovitch.

In a short time he was ushered into the elder's house, the largest in the place, and fronting on the green. Old Michael had been the elder for twenty-five years, and was the richest peasant there. As elder, he enjoyed automatic rule over the village, and Gorloff knew that he was the best person to get news out of.

As soon as the simple supper was over, the vodka (brandy) and pipes were produced; and host and guest drew up beside the roaring fire that conquered the cold outside.

"And now, friend peddler," said old Michael, when they had drunk a first glass, and lighted their pipes, "tell us of czar. Thou hast been around court. How does our czar look? Is he sad on account of these heathen barbarians that desolate the lands of the Crimea? Hast thou seen our czar?"

The Russian peasant, it may be observed, has an intense reverence and affection for the czar, even if he has never seen him, and always speaks of him in the familiar manner.

"Emperor" is to him a foreign title; "czar" is the czar who loves children, and whom they love.

Czar Nicolai reviewed his guard yesterday," said the peddler. "He looked well, and glad, for his faithful soldiers have beaten this accursed English at Balaklava; and Sebastopol defies them."

The elder filled a horn of vodka and rose. "God bless Czar Nicolai, and death to the invaders," he said.

Then he and the peddler drank in silence. The peddler, however, only appeared to drink. In reality he spit most of his liquor on the ground. Michael Ivanovitch finished his to the last drop, and took nearly half a pint of raw

brandy at that one swig. Thus it was no wonder that his tongue loosened.

"Thou art a royal peddler," he said, patronizingly; "and I doubt not thou hast seen much in thy travels. Hast thou ever seen the czar on his throne?"

"Ay, have I," said the peddler, readily; "and that many a time. But I saw only to-day one who looks finer than even the czar himself when he is in his full dress."

"And who was that?" inquired the elder.

"None other than the great Prince Gallitzin," said the peddler, in a tone of rapt enthusiasm. "There is a prince if you like! None of your new creations, but an old boy, who draws his race from the time of the great Constantine."

Michael Ivanovitch rose and poured out a second horn of vodka. Then he said, with tears in his eyes:

"Friend peddler, thou art the finest fellow I ever met. Here is to our lord, Prince Gallitzin, and may he never see old age, but live forever with us!"

A second time the elder drained his horn, and when he sat down the peddler proceeded:

"What! Is he the lord of this village? In truth I did not know it. Does he ever come to see you?"

"Ay, does he," said Michael, proudly; "and that very often. Our lord, the prince, loves his children of Beloi Gorod, and comes—why, he was here to-day; you must have met him going down."

"Ay, I did," said the peddler, carelessly; "but that was on the Moscow road. I know not that he came from here. Why, what does he here?"

Michael Ivanovitch hesitated, but he was by this time very drunk, and correspondingly affectionate.

"Friend peddler," he hiccupped, "I love thee for thy looks and thy news. Swear to me that thou'll never tell a soul of the news, and I'll tell thee. The prince comes here—"

He leaned over and whispered mysteriously: "To *look to the dead in an empty church.*"

In spite of his skepticism, Gorloff started under his disguise, and ejaculated:

"Talk to the devil! How?"

Michael Ivanovitch shook his head with an air of great importance and mystery.

"The Gallitzins were always a wicked race," he said. "When Ivan the terrible was czar, there was but one man in all his kingdom that did not fear him. That was Nicolai Gallitzin, who used to burn his serfs alive, and made even the czar fear him. Our Alexis is a worthy son of the terrible Gallitzins. He can do any thing. Thou knowest, brother peddler, that when a church is deserted by God, the devils flock into it. Well, we have such a church, struck by lightning. No one of us would dare go near it, without the priest to help us, but Alexis Gallitzin stays there whole days and nights at a time."

The peddler crossed himself piously. Then he filled both horns. "Let us drink confusion to the Black One," he said.

But Michael could not quite see the propriety of this. It was attacking, by implication, the family devil of the Gallitzins. "No, no," he said, wisely; "we had better not mention him, friend. He may be looking through the windows. But after all he is not so very bad, or the Gallitzin would not deal with him. Not that the prince would be afraid, were he ever so black."

"Then let us drink to the czar," said the peddler.

"Ay, ay, we'll do that."

The third half-pint finished Michael Ivanovitch, who was glad to stagger to bed. In twenty minutes after the whole village was asleep to all seeming.

The disguised minister rose up from the furs on which he had thrown himself, all dressed, like every one else. He listened to make sure that no one was awake, then went to the table and drained a half-pint of vodka, like so much water, ere he set out on his search in the intense Russian cold.

Then he softly raised the latch and stole out into the street, at the other end of which he had noticed the broken tower of the old church.

He passed the new one on his way, a simple little structure of stone, with a pointed spire cased with shining green tiles. The old one was at the very end of the street, and thither went Gorloff. He could see that the roof was still good over the body of the church, but the tower was gone to ruin.

He heard no one about in the village, and therefore proceeded boldly to the front door of the church.

It was only lightly fastened, and he opened it and looked in. To his surprise a light was burning by the altar, in the way general to Greek and Roman churches.

Gorloff slipped softly in and closed the door. Instead of the intense cold that prevailed without, the atmosphere of the church was glowing with genial heat.

"This church is inhabited, and the superstitious fools have not dared to enter," thought the explorer.

But, except for the heat, there was no mark of the presence of human beings within the building.

The floor was perfectly bare, unbroken by the rigid lines of pews that prevail in our Western churches, for, all through the East, the congregation stands or sits on the floor.

The count stepped noiselessly to one side behind a pillar and looked around him. Rows of dark pictures covered the walls, of which he could see nothing but the frames, for the single candle on the altar only rendered the darkness visible.

Gorloff remained in his position for several minutes, scanning every corner of the edifice, and expecting momentarily to see some figure in motion start out.

But as nothing came, after a while he ventured to steal forward to another pillar. Still there was no sound. A dead stillness prevailed in the church, so complete that the faint distant cry of the wolf on the plains came plainly to the ear. The spy looked all round to find out the source of this mysterious heat, but for some time in vain.

At last, as he stole about on tiptoe, it forced itself on his notice by a blast of hot air which came from a large square hole at the foot of a pillar.

"Hot air! A furnace!" he muttered.

"Now there must be some one to attend to that. Who can they be?"

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE COLUMN IN THE MIST.

The venturesome soldiers knelt down in the thicket, hidden from view themselves, but in full sight of the bridge. Pichot had carried off the Cossack's short musket and boxes, and proceeded with perfect deliberation to draw the rammer and sound the piece. He found it loaded and capped.

With equal deliberation the Highlander piper reloaded the empty chamber of his revolver, keeping a keen look-out on the bridge all the time.

The strange horseman in French uniform, who had puzzled them so much, had entirely disappeared by the time they got to the thicket,

and they could not imagine what had become of him.

Instead of him, they distinctly saw a strong patrol of Cossacks come galloping down from the opposite heights to the bridge and halt there.

Several of the party rode across the bridge, as if to search for the vidette, and clustered together in a group, while voices were heard in excited consultation on the possible meaning of the disturbance.

The two comrades, from their shelter in the thicket, heard every word. But alas, they could not understand one of them.

The Russians seemed to be disputing on the probable fate of the sentry, and hesitating whether to advance or retreat. At last a clear voice shouted out some order, and the men who had halted on the further side of the bridge trotted over to join their officer. About a dozen of the Cossacks then formed an open skirmish line, slung their lances, and the clicking of carbine locks was plainly heard in the stillness.

The skirmish line rode slowly up the hill, skirting the road on either side, as if to search for a possible enemy.

"Stoop down, mon," whispered the piper, as he covered closer into the brush.

The Zouave obeyed in silence, and the tramp and rustle of horsemen moving through the bushes came steadily on, and passed within twenty feet of them.

The left Cossack of the line might have even ridden over them, had not his horse shied away from penetrating the dense scrubby thicket in which they lay; and the soldier, reining the animal to the left, rode round the edge of the copse, in a blissful state of unconsciousness of their presence.

As far as concerned his own safety it was well, for he was covered by the Zouave's piece at the moment he swerved, and another step would have brought the Frenchman's finger to the trigger.

As it was, the batons passed on up the hill, without flushing the game, and the comrades breathed freely as they heard them in the distance grumbling to one another, in tones that expressed their amazement and displeasure.

In a quarter of an hour later they came riding down the hill again, to report to their commander, and the comrades had the satisfaction of hearing them depart.

But two fresh videttes were left at the further side of the bridge, instead of at the summit of the arch, and the comrades came to the conclusion that it was useless to try to penetrate any further that night.

"We'll have to gang back, Peesho," said the piper, in a low tone; "but gin I c'd lay my grip on that fause loon 'o' the hussar busby, I wad be content to stay here till morn."

"Ma foi, mon ami, I will stay, too," whispered Pichot. "He have not crossed de riviere yet, and we can see him ven he come. Eh, mon Zouave, we will give him peppair."

Sandy chuckled, and settled himself down to watch. The corporal of Zouaves laid down on the ground and kept his keen eye roaming up and down the banks on the other side of the river; and for some time a dead silence was preserved.

Then a distant sound slowly grew upon the ear, which gradually resolved itself into the unmistakable rumble of heavy vehicles on a road.

Sandy started.

"The Rooshians are movin', Peesho; you 'a' the rumble of guns. I wauld ye the Highland second sight wauld be deespised."

Pichot made no answer; he was listening too intently.

Sure enough the sound they heard was the unmistakable rumble of guns over a hard road, and, moreover, it was coming straight toward them.

After a while they could hear above it the dull murmur of voices that accompanies the movement of marching men, and Pichot whispered:

"Mon ami, it is well we are here. It is one grand movement."

After that neither of them said a word. They were too much absorbed in listening and watching.

They had a long time to wait, and the night grew colder and colder. A faint breeze came up from the Black Sea as the hours wore on, wafting dense clouds of mist up from the waters.

The thick creeping fog came curling in white wreaths up the valley, and gradually shrouded bridge and river in the thick rail. The rumble of the distant artillery grew plainer and plainer, the murmur of the crowd of footmen more distinct, while the regular clatter of horses' feet in great numbers began to be plainly heard.

As soon as the fog covered every thing, Sandy rose up.

"Come, Peesho," he said, dryly; "the de'il's are coming this way, and it's unlikely they'll find us gin we stay. Let's gang doon across the river, and tak' a luke at them, and then gang hame."

Pichot quietly rose from his covert, and stole down the hill after his comrade, both keeping away from the bridge, where the unhappy Cossack still lay in the grass, bound and gagged.

In a very little time they were at the water's edge, when both lay down and listened.

The rumble of guns had ceased, and the murmur had died away.

But they knew the reason of that without asking. Marching troops are wont to halt every hour for a few minutes, and this silence only portended a halt.

Sandy and the Zouave, without hesitation, waded into the river, resolved to cross to the Russian side, favored by the fog.

In three steps they were waist

THE OLD AND THE NEW.

BY FRANK M. DUNN.

Almost twelve. Time, the sentinel,
Who sees through darkness drear
With stealthy, fleet-footed feet,
Counterfeit of "Passing," "Name?" "Old Year."
What burden, irksome, "Events?" "Old Year."
Packets of memory, tales of thought;
Gleams of Beulah; Marah-draughts;
Life's sun; Death's shade; Joy with grief fraught;
Pictures of want; paintings of wear;
Sighs, heart-born for drear woes;
Smiles, heart-felt for wealth of bliss;
Regret of friends; revenge of foes;
Orline coquette; Keenest, dearest, truest;
For faithless acts, scorned, then performed;
Grand temptations overcome,
The heart by Love's vast legions stormed.

Wallings of life, faint, new-born;
Shriekings of souls, never to cease;
Prayers for pardon; mercy dealt;
Boughs of cypress, palms of peace,
Aunt leaving ragged, old, for us;
Hut! look ye down this sunlit slope;
Doest see that brightly glimmering light?
I leave this dover: the Star of Hope!

Twelve o'clock. The Old Year's gone!
Like some sweet wandering wail from Heaven,
The young New Year is ushered in;
Life born of death; links formed then Heaven,
Welcome! Thou bringest peace blank!
Let names and days be perfect there;
Accept the Old Year's epiphany;
With thankful, earnest, constant prayer.

WILMA WILDE.

The Doctor's Ward:
OR,
THE INHERITANCE OF HATE.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

AUTHOR OF "CORAL AND RUBIN," "ALMA, THE ADOPTED,"
"THE CHERRY WOOD," "THE LITTLE GIRL," "THE LITTLE
HICKORY," "THE DAME DUNDON'S FORTRESS," "THE
WILDE WILDE," "THE WILDE WILDE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XX.

NEW DUTIES.

"TYPHOID in its most malignant form" was the report which came back from the village to Miss Erle that same night after Erle had left her. "Three of the little Biffins down with it, and my hands full there," was the message Prudence sent. The symptoms strong in two other little ones, and the Lee cottage in a bad way. Look up medicines and comforts and eatables; I'll not come back to the house while the infection is spreading.

Prudence was never more in her element than at such an emergency. An excellent nurse and a cleanly housekeeper, she was sure to find sufficient opportunity for the exercise of all her energies in both directions at the cottages. They were a low and stubbornly ignorant class, for the most part, those people whom Miss Erle had taken under the wing of her protection. The village was one of those rare, shut-in nooks where generations of the same people have lived and died, run in the same groove, married and intermarried and isolated themselves from other humanity, until they had lost the finest and best of human impulses in themselves. Such places do exist even in our fair, free land—lingering of the barbarous which reflect all the more brightly by way of contrast the glorious advancement which is the rule and not the exception of the thousands upon thousands of growing villages, and prosperous cities and towns, and towering fields of our own America. But this benighted village had been left to itself for whole generations, and its people were closely associated with it, it was almost in reality composed of one wide-reaching family; almost every household was related to almost every other household by ties of either blood or marriage, until a chance new-comer to the place was a matter not only of wonder and comment, but of jealousy and resentment as well. An outside interest had reached them for the first time in generations, when Miss Erle undertook to better their condition, to encourage improvement, and to widen this limited sphere into which they had shut themselves, as it were, away from the sunshine of prosperous contentment which has pleased even our humblest homes at the head of all their like in all the world. Miss Erle's philanthropy was not well received. The people were inclined to resent as intrusive the manner in which she was in the habit of storming their domicils, inveighing against the remissness she detected at every turn, distributing advice, reproof, sermons, and more welcome worldly gifts, as Erle had laughingly remarked, with impartial liberality—had resented at first; but, as time passed and she continued faithful to her self-constituted duties, as they recognized something of her true heartiness and real interest in their welfare, and reaped the advantages of her generosity, they grew more tolerant of her visitations, and began to display some thankfulness here and there where the greatest favors had been received.

But, after years of faithful adherence to her course, the people as a mass were unregenerate and stiff-necked almost as their predecessors, and any but Miss Erle must have grown disheartened long before this.

The evil tidings aroused her as perhaps nothing else would have done, just then. She could bury thoughts of self with this danger threatening "her poor." She lost no time in buying herself, handing fresh linen out of the closets, weighing packages from her well-filled store-room, diving into odoriferous pantries where dried herbs and roots and barks were ranged on shelves or hung in great bunches, half-forgetting her own disappointment in the activity of the time.

"Tell Prudence I shall be down with fresh supplies myself, in the morning," she said to her messenger. "Have some one go for Dr. Joy, if he has not yet been sent for. There'll be some one needed to stay with the woman in the Lee cottage; get one of them down there for to-night, and we will see to having a regular nurse installed to-morrow."

The woman in the Lee cottage was one of those few exceptions coming latterly into the village. A quiet, respectable person, past middle age, who cultivated her little garden-plot, made the best of the products of her single cow, which pastured with others of the villagers upon broken waste land about, and from her little poultry-yard, and proved herself neat and industrious and thrifty to a degree which gained her no good-will from her already resentful neighbors. She proved by far too convenient a reference, too admirable a model to be held up for their patterning, and the people had hinted among themselves "that for all her sanctified ways she mightn't be so much better than them of the rest which had large families to drudge for, let alone scrubbing and scouring every day of the week." There was some hesitation, now, before one of the village women volunteered to remain with her during the night.

"An ungrateful set!" cried Miss Erle, hotly indignant when she heard it. "I quite lose patience with the lot of them. They take a kindness as no favor and break over a hair at giving one. A thriftless, unregenerate set; they deserve to be left to the worst they would bring upon themselves."

It was a decision Miss Erle had arrived at more than once since she had entered upon

her mission; but now, as before, her annoyance passed, and she was soon actively planning again for their comfort and advantage.

She was sitting over her late breakfast, next morning, after giving her orders to her household. Her own fastidious tastes and habits, her fine old aristocratic proclivities were not to be shaken, even by malignant types of typhoid in her own pet neighborhood. A conscientious, finely-tongued, exact old lady was Miss Erle, one whose duty-promptings did not outweigh the just consideration which was first due to herself.

"What news this morning, Dorothy?" she asked, of the maid who brought in the breakfast things.

"Bad news, Miss Erle. Two more cases, and Mrs. Brooke taken worse in the night and so frightening the Lee woman who staid with her mutterings and ravings that not one can be found to promise as much again. They do say that she has something on her mind, *what?*"

"Oh! they say!" cried Miss Erle, tartly. "And did you ever know them not to say when any one with tolerable good sense and decency set an example to them? They would 'say' if the Angel Gabriel was to come down among them. See who that is, will you?"

She had a glimpse of a little close-veiled, dark-robed figure flit past the window, and a moment later a summons at the door sounded through the house.

"Some one from below, I daresay," Miss Erle mused during the moment Dorothy was gone. "I wonder if I am growing nervous. It really gave me a start, thinking for the second that it looked like—absolutely, like Wilma."

She glanced up at the opening door and sat transfixed at seeing, absolutely, Wilma. She threw back the veil and came forward quickly, with her anxious, timid eyes fixed pleadingly upon the elder lady's countenance.

"I never will give my sanction, if she has come for that; I never will approve of Erle's course in this," was the hardening thought which flashed through Miss Erle's mind as she gave a gesture of dismissal to the maid. The latter went out, and Wilma put forth both her hands, her face eloquent with entreaty.

"Oh, dear, dear Miss Erle," she said. "Won't you befriend me—won't you advise me, help me? There is not one in the wide world to whom I can turn unless to you."

Stiff and still sat Miss Erle, very sternly looking forward into the sweet, wistful, pleading face. The face, she thought, which had led her nephew away from his true allegiance, that had drawn him out of the strictly honorable course from which one of his race should never deviate. That look and the lack of all other response was a sudden chill to Wilma's hope. She stood with a sense of dreary desolation come upon her, the expectation faded from her face, the old weary hopelessness settled from her heart.

"I beg your pardon," she said, quietly. "I never should have come here but for your kind solicitation a few days ago. May I ask of you only this, that you will not mention my having been here?"

Miss Erle, brought back to herself, put out her hand and spoke not unkindly.

"You gave me such a surprise, Wilma, and I may as well say it first as last—I received such a shock and disappointment through you very recently. A sense of the two came so strongly over me just then that I quite forgot myself, though I don't lay any intentional agency to you."

"A disappointment, Miss Erle? Oh, I hope and I think it may not be as you suppose. You are mistaken, I assure you, if you thought the disappointment was to come through Mr. Hetherly."

"Do you know what Erle told me before he left here yesterday, Wilma? That because of his liking for you he meant to break with Ethel; that after discovering his change of mind he would do so if he could not even have the assurance of finding a response in you. You mean, I presume, that you have not seen him and do not know how set in his purpose he has become."

"I mean, dear Miss Erle, that there is no fear of any estrangement coming between them. If there was a difference, rest assured it has been safely passed. They have passed all misunderstanding and have decided that the wedding shall be on New Year's Day. I am glad I can tell you so beyond a doubt."

Miss Erle's face lighted with something very like joyful incredulity, a perceptible change of warmth in her manner. She could not well understand how this happy result had come about. Erle had appeared very decided, and though indulgence might be a prevailing characteristic of his, lack of determination certainly was not. If he had compromised with himself and again acknowledged fidelity to Ethel, it was no half-way compromise to be broken through with any succeeding change or discontent, she was very sure.

"You have lightened my heart of a heavy load, Wilma," she said, with affectionate kindness. "Come here, my child, and let me tell you how really welcome you are. I am truly very fond of you, Wilma, though you may have been led to doubt it just now. There is nothing short of my hope and pride in Erle to which I would not willingly admit you. I felt every word when I told you how glad I would be to secure you as a young companion; if any change has occurred to have sent you here for that purpose, my dear, I am ready to prove the sincerity of my offer."

"A great change has occurred, Miss Erle. One which I can not explain fully, but I have discovered that by remaining there I was liable to bring sorrow and distress upon those who have been so kind to me and whom I so dearly love. I came away without their knowledge, and I know they will be grieved at what will seem such ungrateful conduct from me, but my most urgent wish is to leave them in ignorance of my whereabouts. I want to go where there is no chance of their tracing me. It is my duty, Miss Erle, to lose myself to them, and I came to you because I am myself so inexperienced."

"Whatever cause has sent you, dear child, you shall not leave me while you are free to remain. No, not a word. I need you and I shall keep you. Never mind what reason sent you here, I am rejoiced at your coming. Sit here and breakfast with me and let me tell you what additional cause I have for worryment just now."

Miss Erle's own private conclusion, hastily arrived at, was that Wilma's influence had persuaded Erle to a continuance of his duty, and that Wilma's secret reason for leaving was to avoid the chance of her presence swerving him from the right again.

"All for the best no doubt," thought Miss Erle, "but there is no fear of Erle if he has made his decision firmly."

"There is no place you could well be safer than here, my dear," she said, confidently. "There is work ready to your hand, too, of a kind to call out your sympathy and bring that delicate tact of yours into play. There is a sickness broken out among my poor people here, a fever, but I think we of strong bodily health and good constitutions need have no cause for apprehension. These foolish people! they live in a style to induce disease to breed

among them; they have no care and no forethought, and very often they will not profit by better wisdom and kindly intention. Don't imagine, my dear, that I wish to press you to unwilling service, or that I am anxious you should engage in it at all. I would not urge any one to exposure, and what chance of contagion there may be. I shall as gladly make you welcome here and keep you exclusively to myself in my own home."

"Indeed, I shall be glad to be of use, and I am not afraid of the infection," Wilma declared.

Dear little Wilma! Life was so dreary to her just then, such a hopeless, despairing outlook, that to lay it down in a brave performance of duty and kindness to that humanity to which she was indebted for so little would have seemed no appalling prospect.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DOCTOR'S ADVANTAGE.

MR. RICHLAND, with his back to the fire, the gold watch wound and replaced in his pocket, waited with exemplary patience for minutes past the usual breakfast time that morning. Much given as he was of late to his own contemplative musings the delay was proving a source of annoyance to this model man of exactly regulated habits. Heshifted uneasily, and glanced up at the marble clock, and growled a mild expletive in a gruff voice far down in his chest, and waited again, but the light broke through the clouds in a moment as with a soft sweep of trailing robe, a breath of faint fragrance, a fair face sweet and bright, Ethel made her appearance.

"I am unpardonably late I know," she said from the doorway—and—Is it possible that Gertrude is not down yet? Indeed, in that case, I will not plead any excuse."

"It is unprecedented, this delay on the part of Gertrude. Really, Ethel, I am quite apprehensive over it. Here, William, send some one up to see what may be detaining Mrs. Richland. I am apprehensive that Gertrude is not so perfectly well as always heretofore. Her slight indisposition of last evening may have been the precursor of something more serious. I thought she looked uncommonly weary and affected with lassitude after our return, though she would have it that she was not even fatigued."

His growing uneasiness was set at rest on that score as Mrs. Richland made her appearance a moment later. She was her usual self: that clear, still face never changed even to those who loved her best and were with her most. Looking into its perfect stateliness repose one could ill-imagine any hidden inner emotion, great throes and spasms like the convulsions of those inner fires which burn silently for centuries, and break out to mar fair, unsuspecting earth with some little loosening of the power which holds them.

"I beg your pardon," she said, in a low voice, as she came forward, a sheet of note paper written over in a straggling, broken, uncertain hand, growing firmer at the last, and with the dry blistering of tears upon it. She went close to her husband, no way changed, and yet her face had gone down upon that little sheet twenty minutes before, drawn, hardened, every line strained and tense, her heart a dead, numb agony worse to bear than keen, fierce pain.

"Dearest friend of all I have ever known," ran the note, "do not think me ungrateful for all your great kindnesses. I never can tell how thankful I am and have been; if I never should see any of you again I should never fail to carry loving remembrances of all. I have been very happy here, but it is my duty to go away—a duty I owe to you. Please do not try to discover me; do believe that I am not ungrateful as this must seem, and that I will be happy in being only kindly remembered than if you are distressed at my going, or make an attempt to find me. I shall go to a friend who I am sure will help and advise me for the best, and I shall never cease to pray for you and your perfect happiness for dear Miss Ethel and for Mr. Richland—*all!* Heaven bless you all!"

That was what Mr. Richland read, and looked into his wife's eyes, perplexed and disconcerted.

"Upon my word, Gertrude! Most extraordinary! What is this the child has been doing? Never—surely never so foolishly precipitate as to have gone away!"

"She is certainly gone, Howard. I sent Cicely to her room to call her to me and she found only that."

"Wilma came!" echoed Ethel. "Why should she go? Why in such a manner?"

"And just as we had all grown fond of her," added Mr. Richland, in aggrieved tones. "I presume it is no more than we might have expected; it always is the way, but I own to being disappointed. I would not have thought it of Wilma."

"Don't think hardly of the child now, Howard. I feel confident that some reason which she has not hinted must have persuaded her that this step is for the best for us and her. She is so inexperienced, so apt to be impressed very deeply by what would seem a small matter to us. I do not fear much difficulty in explaining any such fancied trouble away. Of course she must have gone back to her guardian."

William Thompson entering caught the last words.

"I think, ma'am," bowing profoundly, "if I may be allowed to say it, if it's Miss Wilma, which Cicely have told me just now is found missing, I think as how she couldn't have gone to that doctor who calls himself her guardian. The doctor were here at a very improper time if I may be allowed to remark it, seeing as how he knew the family were out, and Miss Wilma was in noways glad to have him as I could see, and she, poor, dear young lady! looking sad and stunned like to touch a heart of stone. I thought more of it after, when I'd gone back to wait by the fire again and could see her face coming up in the coils looking so. And the doctor was saying something as I answered the bell to show him out of coming to-day to find her ready, and Miss Wilma saying not so much as a word to answer him. I'd sooner think she'd care to go away from him any day than to go to him, for if ever I see dread on a human face it were on hers then."

However much William Thompson had positively seen, and how much had watered in his mind since the news spread, his deduction was not far incorrect, and gave a new, startled thought to one present.

"If Dr. Dallas is exerting his influence, it means no good to either her or me. And Wilma, Wilma! if yours should be but the first example of two!"

No trace of the thought reflected itself, as her husband questioned the servant sharply.

"When was this person here, William, Dr. Dallas I mean? I doubt if he is a man I would care to admit to the house. I have heard of him through Crayton, my dear; a charlatan, a dabbler in pharmacy and chemistry, and a syco-phant who hovers about better men until he gets a hold to push himself upon their footing. Very unfortunate that Wilma should have been left to the charge of such a person. Last evening after we left for the theater, you say, William, and remained for an hour? I think there is scarcely a doubt but he has had something to do with this freak of your little protégée, Gertrude."

"I was present when Dr. Dallas stipulated

that he should still be permitted free communication with his ward, and consider his trust in no way yielded through allowing her to come to us," remarked Ethel. "I formed an unfavorable impression of the man, but do not think he could have any object in persuading her to leave us in a manner like this."

"Of course we must not lose time in tracing her whereabouts, whether she has or has not returned to him. The first thing will be to send to the residence of this Dr. Dallas, I presume. Can some one be spared from the household for that, Gertrude?"

"I have been thinking," she answered, slowly, "whether Wilma's reason may be, I am sure it is one which seems sufficient to her. I would not advise any thing public or calculated to disturb her in any refuge she may have taken. Make quiet inquiry and wait in hope that she may either return or communicate some further assurance of her safety. I am sure Wilma meant every word that she has written here; I am sure it seems right to her, she will come back of her own accord. I think we may all trust to her realization of what is right, Howard."

"Upon my word, Gertrude. 'Any refuge she may have taken,' but why should she take refuge from us? Why shouldn't she trust in us if any trouble of her own has overtaken her? I would scarcely have been more surprised if Ethel here had taken such a wild freak into her mind. I am more than grieved, disappointed at her lack of confidence in us, and after our meaning to receive her in Ethel's place in the household, to be vacant so soon. No one ever could take your place in our hearts, little sister, but Wilma had won a very tender place in mine for herself. I repeat, I am inexpressibly disappointed."

In his perplexed annoyance Mr. Richland failed to see that whatever influence had persuaded her, had some way found a hold through themselves. Wilma's duty to them had affected her action, and Gertrude, looking down into the glowing coals, saw further and more than the others could even suspect.

"Whatever Wilma's prompting, I believe it is for the best," she was thinking. "She is brave, self-denying, heroic; but this affair of Erle and Ethel may have proved too great a trial. She may have found herself lacking force of nerve to force down her own pain with the presence of both such constant reminders. I feel—as it only a fancy—I feel if we had her here now, if she had not gone like this, if we should find her at once even, that it would be to lose her completely forever. She is his child—his—and I cling to her so it would be death to give her up now. Oh, merciful heaven! what end to the web! I can only pray with her that no shadow may fall to cloud the happiness of these dear ones."

"Well, Gertrude," her husband interrupted her silent reflection, "what is to be done? Cause the bells to ring and the tidings to go forth, or wait as you say the simple issue of events? One will inflict publicity and annoyance, and the other appears to me heartless, wrong. I should almost feel implicated now if any harm came to the rash girl."

"Could we not make inquiry and trace her quietly, in such a manner she should not suspect we were making the attempt? You mentioned Crayton, and I fancy he would be a good person to consult with. For to-day do nothing, at least until I have acted upon your suggestion and sent to her guardian?"

Meanwhile breakfast had grown cold. Mrs. Richland rang for fresh coffee, and they sat down, a depressed party, all feeling the absence of the trim little figure of the sweet, dark, small face with the soft hair clinging lovingly about the temples, and rippling down about the slender throat—a shape and a face which had grown dear to each of them in these few weeks past.

There proved no necessity for any messenger to be sent to the old house on the Manchester road that day.

Mr. Richland had gone to the bank; Ethel, pale and perturbed, had her own new sense of relief and approval of her own course growing more easy before her suddenly shaken by this unaccountable loss of Wilma, had taken the advice of her brother's wife and kept an engagement she had made, to drive with Mrs. Latham, whose grand reception of a little more than a week ago had opened the gay season. Outwardly the entire household moved on the same; yet scarcely one within the fair, wide walls but felt in greater or less degree, the shock and the depression which had fallen with greatest force on the one who made least display of her emotion—Mrs. Richland.

The news spread over the house through Cicely's agency, had created an under-buzz of excitement, kept down by means of the unchanged surface.

"It's that Dr. Craving Dallas's doings, depend on it," asserted William Thompson, stoutly. "If ever villainy and cat-cunning were set in human countenance, there are in his'n. Our Miss Wilma is too sweet and trusting to be left to that human vulture's clutches. As I always will maintain—Bless my life! It's only the door-bell, but what a start it did give me!"

Cut short in his dissertation, William Thompson hurried to the performance of his duty, and a moment later admitted the chief object of it—Dr. Craven Dallas himself.

"Which I was never so took aback," said the irrepressible William, in a snatched side-conference with the housekeeper, on the way of transmitting his message—"I never was, as when he ups and asks for Miss Wilma, with his compliments to Mrs. Richland, and will see her for a moment alone, while he waits for his ward? And what does he but walks off, not into the drawing-room at all, as I was thinking of asking him to take a hall chair, but like a lord at home, straight into the library. 'Let your mistress know I am waiting here,' says he, lofty as you please, with his yellow eyes shut down and looking on all sides of him as though he'd like to put the whole establishment in his pocket and walk off with that same. It's a blessing that our Mrs. Richland is of a sort to put him down to his proper level."

Mrs. Richland was before her dressing-glass, comparing the hasty toilet of plain outdoor wear when the message reached her. She turned to her maid, who was laying out mantle and gloves and veil for her, secretly wondering at the whim which was taking her mistress walking in that unassuming guise.

"You may put them back, Cicely. This interruption changes my mind. I will not go out this morning at all, I think."

She went down as she was, the plain dark garments sweeping about her stately form, ease and grace in every quiet motion, the steady, unimpaired eyes looking forward into the face of this early visitor as the door unclosed and left her standing before him. With an inclination of the head and a gesture of recognition, she stood silently awaiting his speech.

"Pon honor, very much as a queen might do with no very well-favored subject," thought the doctor, "and I can very well imagine, my high-toned madame, secure in the assurance of your own insolent superiority though you may be, that the sight of the one-time needy young physician should be no very agreeable one to you—by no means a person with whom you

might desire to be thrown into continued juxtaposition which might overrule fancied forgetfulness."

He bowed profoundly before the coldly-silent presence.

"I trust sincerely I do not intrude upon prior arrangements," he said, blandly deprecating. The doctor always deprecating intrusions on his own part with a sort of Uriah Heap humbleness, which proved particularly offensive to his present listener. "Favor me by being seated, madame; there will be no need to delay my subject. Grieved as I must be to insist upon any change which may not tally with your wishes and most generous intentions, I have still a duty to perform that shall be faithfully executed to the furthest of my poor ability. My ward, I presume, has not left you in ignorance of a decision I was forced to impart to her during an interview last evening."

"Wilma has told me nothing, Dr. Dallas," Mrs. Richland was non-committal regarding the cause of such reserve, waiting to conclude how far he might be concerned in this step of Wilma's.

"Ah, that makes my task the harder! I find it necessary, absolutely a moral necessity, to resume my active duties as Wilma's guardian, to request her immediate return under my own personal observation, to my own individual care. I have already apprised my ward of the facts of the case. My housekeeper, who is extremely fond of the young lady, and who has done little but make regret over our temporary loss of her, has put her old room into its previous order, and I am come prepared to accompany Wilma back to her home which will never cease to be freely hers. Will you kindly permit her to be informed that I am here for the purpose?"

"First, will you explain to me what cause necessitates this sudden change? Accept my warm interest in your ward as apology for asking."

"Family reasons entirely, Mrs. Richland," he answered, with apparent carelessness, but with his light, furtive eyes scanning her closely. "The assurance of advantage to be derived from Wilma through—as yet—an unacknowledged connection. I am sure you will rejoice to know that Wilma, presumably alone in the world, has one living relative very favorably situated in the scale of earthly possessions and honors from whom she may unquestionably expect to reap some very tolerable benefit."

"And this relative," queried the lady, "is reconciled to her existence, prepared to acknowledge and receive her?"

"I have every reason to believe, madame, that this relative does not even suspect the girl's existence. I have my own private opinion at heart that the knowledge will be a matter of any thing but rejoicing to the person most nearly concerned by it. But of that, what? Certainly nothing with imperative duty in the other scale."

"That with Dr. Dallas means what sum? I think I understand your motive, sir, and am sufficiently interested to submit to any fair demand rather than part with Wilma. It is our wish—Mr. Richland's and mine—to adopt Wilma into our household; to receive her and cherish her and be assured of her as though she really were one of us. Every man has his price, Dr. Dallas; let me ask again plainly what is yours?"

"How the maternal heart, all unsuspecting, responds to nature's thrill," was the doctor's sarcastic thought. "And how our fine lady's worldly wisdom reaches to the root of affairs! If better calculations fail, my dear Madame Richland, I may even dole a considerable price out of you, but not yet—not yet."

"My dearest lady," he exclaimed, with a plaintive intonation of reproach and that of offensive touch of deprecation conveyed. "Must I assure you that my interest in Wilma has been without money and is without price? It is so, I assure you. For the sake of the child's welfare I shall not neglect one precaution in making her claim good; my own reward will be found in witnessing her prosperity. We could not wish it to one more deserving. May I trouble you—I am in some haste this morning—again to summon Wilma to attend me? Your pardon for having detained you, Mrs. Richland."

"It is unfortunately impossible to comply," answered Mrs. Richland, quietly. "You may understand better than we what reason Wilma had for her action, Dr. Dallas. She left us unknown to any one, some time during the night or early morning. Her room was found vacant, her bed unoccupied, in Wilma gone."

The doctor's jaw dropped. His eyes opened wide for once and returned her fixed gaze with such a scintillation of angry, cruel green lights that her heart sickened, nothing disturbed though her outward composure remained.

"Wilma gone—Wilma gone!" he repeated. Then, with a sudden, tigerish fierceness, and a blinding suspicion rushing across him, breaking the smooth mask of craft and oily subtlety—"Are you instrumental in that, Mrs. Richland? If you have undertaken any such underhand game, by the Lord! you have chosen the wrong man to play it with."

Her steady, calm and scornful eyes gave him an assurance of how hasty his conclusion had been, but it was an effective declaration of war between them he was in nowise inclined to retract.

"You forget yourself, sir," she answered, coldly. "There need be little more said until Wilma is found again; but, meantime, I refer you to Mr. Richland's solicitor in the hope of reaching some definite agreement regarding the end we should be happy to effect. I have the pleasure of wishing you good-morning, sir."

"I beg your pardon for detaining you one moment, Mrs. Richland." The doctor had gone back to his usual bland and courteous demeanor, but every word was underlaid with a sarcasm which grated upon her sensitive ear. "Let me hope Wilma may be found very soon. If you had no interest in her disappearance, I shall hope to invest you with one to hasten her recovery—a secret, by the way, which I was favored through her bearing last evening. It is my duty now—how incessant is this stern duty in her calls upon us!—it is my duty to inform you, Mrs. Richland, after a considerable lapse of time, that the child born in an isolated old house, forty miles out of the city, on a stormy December night seventeen years ago, never died; that that child lives to-day as Wilma Wilde, your own daughter, Mrs. Richland!"

He had meant to give her a sudden shock, and succeeded admirably, though a slow moment of sheer, astonished disappointment elapsed before he was permitted a realization of the fact.

That marble face had wonderful powers of self-command; those deep, inscrutable eyes, so earnestly steady that they abashed even him, were so steeled against surprises that this one was a moment breaking through. There seemed a slow smile of incredulity upon her lips as she put a hand on the arm of a chair—she had stood all this time—wheeled it about and sunk down into it. Not a feature of the marble mask changed, but as if through a deliberate

contemplation of the act, Mrs. Richland's stately head rested back against the chair, and then and there under the doctor's very eyes she quietly fainted.

CHAPTER XXII

EIGHTEEN YEARS BEFORE.

CAPTAIN LEIGH BERNHAM was walking his floor with a rapid, regular stride, that steered bronze face telling little, though there was a quiver at times and an unusual paleness hidden under the heavy grizzled mustache, his eyes fixed on the straight space before him, steadfast and inscrutable to a degree which might have rivaled Mrs. Richland's own. Captain Leigh Bernham's strong, contained mind had grasped a refrain which was repeating itself under the disconnected jarring chords of thought that were "less a melody than pain" with him at that hour of that particular morning. That incredible surprise of the previous night was thrilling him with something harder to bear than simple unbelief.

"Never dead and never buried seventeen years ago," sounded that refrain in the captain's mind—"alive, alive!"

And above it—"Another man's wife—oh, Rose! oh, Rose! Dead to me, and it would be less pain to know that the grass was growing green and flowers blooming over your head—oh, Rose! And she could see me and know me with those cold, unseeing eyes. What did she think of the change, I wonder, and how much of it will she take home to her own proud, unrelenting heart? Whatever my faults and follies then, whatever my long loneliness and my long mourning since, I always cherished her first and loved her best above all the world. I would have been true to her memory forever, and she is alive and another man's wife."

He paused at a turn before a square inclined mirror which reflected back his bronzed face and gloomy, stern eyes and soldierly figure—paused and put up his hand to run it through the close, nut-brown hair, just tinged here and there by silvery threads. The beard, more ruddily brown, with more silver streaks, and the firm mouth, the bronze gathered from long years' exposure to wind and sun and storm, a different face from one which came up as having looked back from his mirror, something more than seventeen years before.

"Little wonder if she had not recognized me," he thought, "but Rose is not one to forget. What was that she said when we spoke of this once? It was when I gave her a picture of myself and got her promise of this one of hers which I have worn through all the years since—foolish, sentimental times those, and to think how I have held to them. I asked her, would she love me after all these years when the face grew old and seemed and the hair silvered, and she said—I remember her very words—she said:

"Through all time and all eternity the very same, Ray—calling me by that name. The dear face itself can never change for me. If any impossible thing should separate us for years and years, and if you should come back to me wrinkled and gray, as you said just now, the eyes of love would not be deceived. I should surely know you and love you all the same, Ray."

"Any impossible thing! Ah, poor girl! She could have no idea how very soon the most probable expectation I had in view should part us; and I, pitiful young fool! had trusted to her love to follow me to the end of the world, if need be. Heaven pity me! my great disappointment in her love found wanting came and was over seventeen years and more ago. I could not hold myself blameless through my too much love for her, and she never forgave me the deception. I play myself yet as I think of the time when the word came that she was dead. Dead! my little Rose dead! All my faith in Heaven and earth would have been shaken first had any one whispered this—that I should find her living and have sooner known her dead! And yet, poor Rose! not for any temptation in life would I breathe one word to injure you now. But the child—our child—whom you deserted for seventeen years, whose existence I did not even suspect, she is mine; not even you can claim so good a right."

He turned and fell to walking the floor again, a deep corrugation coming into his forehead, a trick of expression which repeated in Wilma. His thoughts had gone to her, the child of the brief, bright romance of his youthful, foolish days, the little daughter whose existence he had not known until these later days.

"Little Wilma! I know I frightened her, but so near, with her sweet, shy face just discernible through the dusk, I could not resist taking her in my arms and giving her a father's first caress. Poor little thing! at least I shall make her life happier than it was before."

Some one knocked. Captain Bernham paused and gave a brush of his hand over his heavy mustache. Pallor and quiver which had been there changed to the usual close setting of the firmly-chiseled lips.

"Come in," said the captain, and Lenoir answered the invitation.

It was nearly noon of a clear, cool November day. A brisk walk through the bracing air had brought a flush into the young man's cheeks, and an added brightness to his fine dark eyes, yet for all that he was thin and worn even to a casual observer. "It is better to wear out than to rust out," says some wiseacre, and Justin Lenoir seemed to have taken it in hand to verify the maxim in as short a time as the process of wearing out could well be consummated. His was not a vigorous constitution at the best. Those long nights of incessant duty upon both mental resources and physical endurance, the hours required by his editorial duties, supplemented by other hours of brain labor lasting habitually into the breaking dawn, and often until the sun was high up and busy traffic begun in the streets—all following this restless American impulse of ours which has no mercy upon health or life or any thing except the iron endurance that can stand firm in its own place and be beaten and jostled on all sides, and take no impression from the wear and tear of the multitude about—but it all told upon Lenoir. Possibly his own reflection that the result would be the same, whatever use he made of the time, was in part correct. More than overwork was proving a source of unrest to Justin Lenoir, but who ever knew a restless mind to be put at ease by the extra efforts of a restless body?

"I came immediately upon receipt of your note," Lenoir said, dropping into the seat Bernham placed for him. "My landlady did not disturb me until my usual going out hour. You know the reprehensible habit to which newspaper men are necessarily addicted, of turning night into day, and vice versa, and that must pardon my delay."

"I dare say I took a liberty in addressing you at all, but I trust to your accommodating spirit not to think it such," said the captain, frankly. "Are you at liberty now, Lenoir? Can I claim you for a half-hour or so without interfering with duties of your own?"

"Quite at liberty, and happy to place myself at your service," Lenoir answered.

"And I want to claim a service of you. I

think you are acquainted with an influential family here—the Richlands. Yes, I remember you had come from there, the other night, when I met you first. A very short acquaintance it has been to warrant this offering of my confidence and trust upon your kindness. If you have any delicacy in regard to acting for me, my dear fellow, don't hesitate to say it after I have told you how my case stands. There is a young lady staying with the Richlands—Miss Wilma Wilde. Have you met her?"

"Frequently. I had the liberty of the house through the kindness of its master—of the library more properly—a short time since, and became quite well acquainted with Miss Wilde in my daily comings and goings."

"She is made quite one of the family, then?"

"Yes, and is well worthy the distinction. Such a peculiar, sensitive, childlike, trustful yet pathetic face, I never saw anywhere else, and the face is the clear mirror of a pure soul. They all think and make much of her. An artist friend of mine, Laitner, has done little but rave of her since our last evening there. He wants to paint Wilma as Cinderella, and as Laitner is not to leave his way in all things, he may hand Wilma down to fame in that guise yet."

The concealed lines about the captain's lips had softened during the first part of the other's speech, only for an instant, and then were firm as before.

"Cinderella must have more lasting assurance of more real pleasure," he said, quietly. "You can imagine how gratified I am at hearing you express yourself so favorably, how truly happy I am in announcing myself Wilma's father. Certainly an abrupt and unexpected announcement. Lenoir looked the surprise it had given him."

"It was a matter of astonishment even to me," the captain continued, answering the look. "It is less than a fortnight since I discovered that I had a daughter, and only yesterday that I traced her whereabouts. Will you smoke and listen to a rough sketch of my story, Lenoir? My pipe has been my solace for so long that it is inseparable as a companion now."

He pushed a case of Havana across to Lenoir, but took down a beautifully colored meerschaum for himself, filling it leisurely from that heavy silver tobacco-box which had arrested Dr. Craven Dallas' covetous eye.

Lenoir lit his cigar and settled back to listen with unmistakable interest awakened. The captain drew some slow whiffs, watching the misty blue rings curl about his head and drift off in almost imperceptible clouds.

"Something near eighteen years ago," he began, in that same quiet tone he had used, "I was a military student, free for an interval, with an appointment to a commission and active service under discussion. I was passing the interval in the city here and scouring the country roads in shooting costume and hunting equipments, with very indifferent success. I had the misfortune to bring down some staid old body's pet pigeon one day, and somebody's companion, who was in some way responsible for the bird being beyond the limit of its regular haunts, was in great trepidation over the accident. I can say, after all this time and after seeing women from all parts of the globe, that the companion was the loveliest creature sun ever shone upon; nearer perfection than any thing my impulsive young imagination had ever pictured, or that I have met with in all of my experience. Seeing her shrinking, I volunteered, as was my duty, to explain the affair to whoever it might concern, take all the blame upon myself, where it belonged, and consequently free her from any reproach she may have feared. Her employer turned out to be a very exact old lady with a stern manner, but I am sure, a kind heart. I managed to come out of the affair, which promised a disturbance, with colors flying and all honors attached."

"That was the beginning, and the end was I married the pretty companion a fortnight after my first meeting with her. I can see why, you think, that it was a marry in haste to repent at leisure, but my life with my head clear as it is to-day, with the same run of circumstances to impel but lacking the knowledge of what was to come later, I should have surely married Rose as then."

"Rose!" spoke Lenoir, quickly. "Then the lovely Rose of your miniature was the one you married, Captain Bernham?"

"That was Rose." There was the slightest disturbed inflection in the captain's tone; it had been a slip of his, mentioning the name at all. "You may wonder less at my infatuation now. I married Rose in secret and under an assumed name. There were family reasons for that. You know where family pride will run sometimes, and I can assure you that the stiffest, most unbending and unreasonable old families that branch over Maryland to-day—a wild, reckless, rash-minded set of men we have been from first to last, I say as well say at once. Of our branch there were left at that time only my brother and myself—my twin-brother he was—both worthy representatives of our race gone before; and an old grandfather, who was stiffer and prouder and rasher and more unreasonable than both of us young bloods taken together, and of whom we stood in wholesome awe to this day, at least whatever lawlessness we may have been guilty of behind his back and in defiance of his strict prohibitions. His influence had put us at the military school and insured us our commissions later. In his eyes we were young vandals, both of us, never taken into any very especial favoritism, though it was generally understood that one or the other should inherit after him. Some disinterested person once broached his leaving it to us jointly, but he was stiff-necked in his intention. There should be no division of the property. It should go to the one who proved himself most worthy, which meant with my grandfather the one who 'chanced to be in best favor at the latest moment. Poor old gentleman! He had lived a high life, and near the close of it got a fever for speculation and barely escaped a pauper's grave at last. But all that was long afterward, and at the time a slight coolness had come up between my brother Ray and myself regarding this very chance of inheritance. The question of who shall be heir has made worse breaches between us close friends, but Ray and I were never what we might have been to each other because of that. We were doing each other the worst of injustice in those days, though we never discovered it until too late to remedy, long years of estrangement lying between. While I was in the city here, galloping over the country roads, or making the best of stolen opportunities with Rose, it was not very well known where my brother was passing his time. Among various reports one had come to me that he was not so far distant as I might suppose, and a whisper came with it that he was keeping a surveillance over my actions, hoping to discover a flaw which might cut short my chances and at the same time advance his own of succeeding our grandfather. It was made plausible by my meeting him in the street one evening, but, before a chance to accost him was given, he plunged in a crowd and eluded me, doubtless thinking I would persuade myself I had been mistaken in the recognition. Believing the worst, I set myself to outwit him and hold my

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BLODGINS, HIS MOUTH.

BY TOM JOT, JR.
It was a matter of much thought
To tell where it began;
It was too large a mouth to be
Upon so small a man.
And were he coming up the road
Far in the distance dim,
You'd see his mouth an hour before
You'd catch a glimpse of him.
Nature's sublime economy
It showed without a doubt,
For vast material was saved
By leaving that much out.
'Tis said by those who knew him well
That from the very first
He always used the largest words
Whenever he conversed.
And when he had to pay a pawn
With just one kiss, no more,
The fair young damsel would complain
That each one counted four.
While for vain-glorious forms of speech
He did not care a fig;
'Tis said because his mouth was large
He always talked quite big.
By men quite competent to know,
It has been truly said
His mouth could never grow unless
They did enlarge his head.
I've often heard of men who could
Speak volumes, but I'm sure
I never saw such facilities
For doing that before.
He had an alligator laugh;
And when he went to smile
He'd show his teeth as white
Three-quarters of a mile.
But, one day Blodgins disappeared;
'Twas thought he had gone south;
But I stand ready to believe
He crawled into his mouth.

Strange Stories.
A GAME WITH ST. PETER.
A STORY OF FAMOUS CLAUDE DUVAL.

BY AGILE PENNE.
THE time, a bright August morning in the year 1678; the place, a sheltered nook 'twixt two huge oaks, by the high-road leading from Bedford to Northampton, in Merrie England, the huge oak trees known far and wide as the twin sisters; the man, a tall, well-knit fellow, dressed in a ragged suit of black, and seated upon a stone. Before him was a second stone which served as a table.
The man was deeply occupied. His hat was cast carelessly upon the ground, the shirt at his neck was undone, and his handsome face, which belied French blood, was strongly marked with the lines of care.
In his hand he held a dice-box, and he was most earnestly engaged in play; the right hand against the left, apparently.
The dice rattled within the box.
"Now then," cried the gambler, "one more throw. I'll lay three ten crowns upon the cast. Play fair! no palming, if thou lovest me! The dice, I'll swear, are not loaded, but good true cubes of ivory. Now!"
Ont rolled the dice upon the stone.
"Ten!" cried the man, his tone one of triumph. "Alas! I'll lay thee another wager of ten crowns to five that thou canst not beat that cast! Is it a bargain? Yes? go on then. If the Doctrine of Probabilities, which has received the sanction of our king, be correct, there are just eleven chances to one that the throw will not be beat."
The left hand placed the dice within the box, shook them up vigorously and rolled them out upon the dice table.
"Eleven!" cried the man, in horror. "Oh, Saint Bridget! did ever mortal man see such luck? Faith! if this goes on much longer, I shall not have enough left to buy a rope to hang myself with, out of all my father left. But come, another try! Luck can't not always run in one direction."
Then the right hand picked up the dice, placed them in the box and rattled them up and down.
And as the stranger, cursing his luck and calling upon all the saints in the calendar to aid him, was shaking the box in a most furious manner, along the highway came a little withered-looking old man. He was dressed even worse than the tattered gambler, who was swearing to himself in so outrageous a manner.
As the stranger approached, the man seated beneath the oaks attracted his attention, and he listened to his many oaths in wonder.
So intent was the gambler in cursing the dice, himself and all else in the world, that he did not hear the footsteps of the stranger. See him he could not, for his back was toward him.
"Now then, I'll play no more unless my luck changes!" the dice cried. "Ten crowns I'll put upon this cast, and may Satan seize the dice if they do not win for me!"
Down came the box, out rolled the dice, a four and a three.
"Seven!" howled the gambler, in disgust. "Oh, Saint Denis! what a throw that is!"
The little old man, who had been watching the stranger in utter astonishment, had looked first to the right and then to the left, in order to discover with whom the gambler was playing, but no mortal soul save he and the dice stood within sight.
The little man crept a step nearer and peered over the shoulder of the gambler, as though he expected to see the stranger's adversary stretched upon the ground, upon the other side of the stone, which, for the nonce, had been transformed into a gaming-table.
The noise of his tread attracted the attention of the gambler, and he roused himself from his despair and looked around. When his eyes fell upon the stranger, he cried aloud in joy.
"Welcome, good man!" he exclaimed; "you have come in time. Here have I lost a matter of nearly five guineas, and I have grave doubts whether I have been fairly dealt with. If there has been cogging or palming in the game, the wagers are off and I'll pay a single crown. The dice are fair; I purchased them myself."
"But with whom do you play?" asked the old man, in wonder.
"With Saint Peter!" echoed the old man.
"Yes; he, you know, that keeps the gate to Paradise; and though I own that it would go against my heart to charge so worthy a gentleman with using trick and unfair device, like a Captain Sharp at a fair plucking a 'pigeon,' yet else, Satan himself must be in the dice for me to lose so constantly and steadily."
All this the stranger said with a grave face and an earnest air, yet there was a peculiar twitching about the eyes which impressed the old man with the belief that the gambler's reason was unsound.
"But I do not understand it at all," the little old man said, timidly. "How is it possible that you can play at dice with a saint?"
"Easy enough," replied the gambler, scornfully. "After my father died and I was left alone to me in a dream, and a jolly fellow he was, too. He told me that the world had become so bad that few troubled him to open the gates of Paradise, and that he wanted some agreeable occupation to enable him to pass the time away. And after more words he challenged me to come every pleasant morning to

the Twin Sisters, and play at dice for five hours or so. Willing to oblige, and thinking possibly when my time came to tap at Saint Peter's gates, it would be as well to have a friend at court, I consented, but so deep in play have we got, that it is common with us to throw dice from sunrise to sunset. Now, we are right in the middle of a main. See, my right hand—there throws for me—has turned up seven, and there is ten crowns staked upon the cast. Now, my left hand will play for the saint, and since, in the last cast, he threw eleven to my ten, it is safe to wager that he will more than equal my throw now. I have it!" cried the gambler, suddenly. "I will wager the twenty crowns to ten that the saint will win; so, I shall get my money back."
"Nay," replied the little old man, in evident alarm. "I have no money, and if I had, I would not venture crowns upon such an uncertain issue."
"At all events thou shalt see that the saint deals fairly with me and dost not cheat me out of my rights," grumbled the gambler.
"I will do that willingly enough," said the old man, amused at the conceit of the madman, for such he thought the dice.
"Two wax candles to our Lady if I win the cast!" cried the gambler, as he rolled the dice out upon the stone.
But it was evident that Saint Peter had more influence at the court of Dame Fortune than the patron to whom the gambler had appealed, for the cubes counted up twelve for the saint.
"These are Satan's own bones!" cried the gambler, in a rage. "See! they give Saint Peter twelve when he needed but eight to win the stake."
"Luck does run against you," remarked the old man, in sympathy.
"Never spoke you truer word!" said the dice, sadly.
"I have lost five guineas since I came to play this morning," suggested the old man.
"A debt of honor should be paid at once!"
"But how can you pay Saint Peter?"
"Why, he always sends his messengers to receive some poor soul who needs the money." Then the gambler surveyed the little old man. "And now I look at you, I nothing doubt that Saint Peter has sent you to receive the money. Here are the five guineas; take them and begone. And hark ye," the gambler added, as the old man clutched the money and began to hobble onward, "pass this way this afternoon or to-morrow, perchance I may have more for you."
The gambler then returned to his dice, and the old man went on his way.
No longer, though, was the ragged old man, Simon Wedgwick, by name, and chief agent to the Bishop of Bedford. He was now on his way to collect the rents due to his master, and had dressed himself in rags that he might not excite suspicion and be robbed on the way.
The rents collected, master Simon hurried home, and came again to the Twin Sisters. He thought another five guineas might not come amiss from the mad gambler.
"Double or quits, and the stake is mine!" quoth the gambler, as Simon approached him.
"How goes the game?" asked Simon.
"Bravely!" cried the gambler. "Saint Peter owes me a round thousand pounds!"
"He'll not be apt to pay thee!" Simon suggested.
"Oh, yes, he will; has he not sent me thee, his banker, the agent of his grace of Bedford, so hand over the rents you have collected to-day, and Saint Peter and I are quits."
Too late, worthy Simon saw the snare. No help thought he. The dice and pounds were paid, and the mad dice, wild, gay Claude Duval, the noted highwayman, was so much the richer for his shrewd scheme.
Miss Leighton's Pride.
A CHRISTMAS STORY.
BY EBEN E. REXFORD.
It was Christmas morning.
The snow had fallen in the night and lay like a white garment over tree and house-top, and shut out the grim and grimness of the streets from the gaze. It was as if the world had put on new and spotless robes to celebrate the birthday of the Saviour.
Miss Leighton stood at the window of her stately mansion and looked out.
Sleighs were beginning to pass up and down the streets, laden with merry maids and women and children. The jingle of sleigh-bells filled the air with gay, glad music. Happy faces passed before Miss Leighton's gaze as she looked out from the folds of lace which shimmered in the keen, clear sunlight of the winter morning like frost.
"How happy everybody looks this morning," she said. "Everybody but me. I must keep my Christmas alone."
With all the splendor of which she was mistress, Rachel Leighton was poor as a peacock ought to be. She missed from her life that love and friendship which constitutes true wealth. She looked about her on this Christmas morning, as she turned away from the window, and sighed. The floor was covered with a carpet whose softness gave back no echo to the heaviest tread. The walls were hung with rare and beautiful pictures. Looking at some of them on that crisp, bracing winter day you could have forgotten the keen air out of doors, the snow and frost, and thought yourself in the warmth and balm of summer time. Flowers bloomed in tropical beauty and luxuriance in the great bay-window, and the fragrance filled the room until with the warmth which pervaded the air, the place was really a bit of summer transplanted into the winter. A piano stood open, with music scattered over it. Costly little busts were here and there on brackets, and books lay on the tables, inviting one to open them, and forget every thing else in their pages. In the window, among the trailing ivies, a canary swung and sung. There was nothing lacking in comfort or elegance. But to Miss Leighton there was something lacking after all. It was lonely.
She stood there and thought of what the Christmas morning used to be. How very different from this! How anxiously she and her sister Alice had waited for the first streaks of dawn to spring from their beds and wish the "merry Christmas" wishes. They had been very happy in those days, she and Alice. Their father was with them then, and the little circle was a loving one. By and by that father whom they loved so well died, and the property was left to each sister; half to Rachel, half to Alice. Rachel was to have charge of Alice's until she married. On her marriage, provided that marriage was not with John Van Dyck, who was the only child of a life-long enemy of Mr. Leighton's, the property belonging to Alice was to be made over to her. John Van Dyck had loved Alice, and Mr. Leighton had kept them apart, and hence that clause in his will which gave Alice's share of the property he left to a hospital in case she married the son of the man he hated, and whom he had forbidden her to marry. But Alice was a true woman. Love to her was more than wealth. And so she

married John Van Dyck, and the property went to the hospital her father had named, and Rachel, with all the old Leighton pride, shook her off, and thenceforth their ways ran wide apart. Alice was happy with the man she loved and who loved her. Rachel was lonely with the wealth which could buy her splendor and nothing more.
She thought of it all this Christmas morning. She had not seen Alice for a long time. Once in a great while they met, but not often. Their lives were in different spheres. John Van Dyck had lost all the property he had inherited from his father, and took a position as clerk in a large firm in a part of the city Rachel seldom visited. When wealth was gone, and they had to begin at the foot of the ladder, their summer-time friends forsook them, and consequently John and Alice crossed Rachel Leighton's pathway but seldom, since they had been dropped from the circle in which wealth had given them a place.
Somehow, this Christmas morning seemed more lonely to Rachel than any other one ever had. She knew that in other homes there would be glad and happy greetings. There would be pleasant reunions among friends and kindred. But she must keep her Christmas alone. Something like a tear trembled over her lashes as she turned away from the window, and ordered the carriage. She would ride. Perhaps that would help to drive off the loneliness, yearning feeling which tormented her.
She lay back listlessly and watched the passers-by from her carriage windows. How happy they seemed to be!
Suddenly a cry came to her, a bitter, sharp cry of pain, and the horses were reined up sharply and suddenly. She opened the door and looked out. A child had slipped in crossing the street, and the carriage had passed over her ankle. The girl sat on the ground, with her hands holding the injured limb tightly, as if to force back the pain that it gave her.
You are hurt. Poor thing!" said Miss Leighton, pityingly. "Help her into the carriage, Robert, and then drive wherever she wants to go. As well there as anywhere, and she can not walk."
The coachman assisted the girl into the carriage. She lay back among the luxurious cushions, half forgetting her pain in the pleasure which the prospective ride gave her.
"Where do you want to go?" asked Miss Leighton, kindly.
The girl named a street in the lower part of the town, and fixed her wondering blue eyes on Miss Leighton's face suddenly, in a long, steady, earnest look.
"Ain't you my aunt Rachel?" she asked, timidly.
Miss Leighton started at the unexpected query.
"What is your name, little one?" she asked, hastily.
"My name is Rachel," the child answered.
"Papa's name is John, and mamma's name is Alice. I've got an aunt Rachel, but I never saw her. Mamma's got her picture, though, and looks just like you. I started to find this morning. Mamma said she wished she could wish her 'Merry Christmas,' and I thought maybe I'd find her. I runned away. Are you her?" and the child's wide blue eyes looked questioningly into Miss Leighton's.
"Yes, I am your aunt Rachel," she answered, struggling with her pride. A strange battle was going on in her heart between that pride and a yearning for friendship and some one to love her. Could she let bygones be bygones? Could she forget that Alice had married against her father's wishes? After all, what right had her father to forbid Alice to marry the man she loved? Love was not to be sacrificed for a mere old-time grudge.
"Oh! I'm so glad," cried the child. "I wish you a merry Christmas, aunt Rachel!"
Miss Leighton caught the child and kissed her over and over, great tears blinding her eyes. Her heart had given way to its longing. On this Christmas morning she would put by the past, and begin a better, happier life.
The carriage stopped before a plain little house.
"You may wait," she said to the driver, and taking little Rachel in her arms, she ran up the steps and went in without knocking.
"Mamma! Papa!" cried the child. "I runned away to find aunt Rachel, and wish her merry Christmas, and I found her!"
Alice turned suddenly from the baby's crib, over which she had been bending. She saw Rachel standing on the threshold, and a cry broke from her lips.
"Oh, Alice!" the elder sister cried. "I want you to forgive me, and forget the past. I want you to love me. I am so lonely!"
"I wish you merry Christmas!" Alice said, so solemnly and earnestly that it was a prayer, and then Miss Leighton found herself sobbing on her sister's breast, and Alice was kissing her, and dropping happy tears upon her face.
"John," Rachel Leighton said, a little while after that, "I want to begin a new life from today. I want you and yours to come to me. My home is large enough for all of us. I want happy hearts to fill it, and drive out the weary loneliness that has been there so long. You must not tell me no."
An hour later John and Alice, and little Rachel and the baby followed Miss Leighton up the steps of her splendid home, and there were glad faces, and gladder hearts, among its splendor on that Christmas afternoon.
And Miss Leighton's heart was full of the grand melody of peace on earth and good-will to man.

Half a Yard of Alpaca.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

JOHN LANG laid an open letter on the desk before him; propped his elbows on it, and rested his head on his hands to read it.
A lengthy, friendly letter, written in Marcia St. Cymon's most genial, gossip style, and more than once Mr. Lang caught himself smiling at her ready wit.
"Speaking of Ellie," the letter said, "and having learned the day was decided on that will make you a happy man (I am sorry that I can not conscientiously say that Ellie will be so delighted a bride) remind me of your promise to your friend, Mr. Chauncey, to take him to Lakeland for a visit, provided we are not down to the city before you come. If we are, we will leave our address at the office, and you will call, with Mr. Chauncey, at our hotel."
Mr. Lang smiled at the genuine friendliness Marcia displayed; he thought what a charming cousin she would be—and what a good wife she would make Harry Chauncey, provided he met her expectations. He folded away the letter, and resumed his books until nearly twelve, and then went out to meet Harry Chauncey on the corner, just entering his restaurant for lunch.
A dashing, good-looking young man, with an immaculate shirt bosom and spotless cuffs, ornamented with large square buttons. A faultlessly fitting overcoat, a soft hat of becoming proportions.
He had a bright expression of face, a keen light in his eyes, and a general pleasant way with him that "took" wonderfully—especially

among the ladies, which accounted for the fact that he was the salesman in Merino & Satine's great dry goods house.
Just now he gave his hand confidentially to John Lang.
"Got a letter yet? any hope of my meeting the charming heiress? I tell you what, Lang, if ever a fellow was sick of counter-jumping, it's this one."
"You mean you'd rather marry Miss St. Cymon and her forty thousand, and live at the Grange, and drive your own barouche?"
"Have a darkey in livery to drive it for me," corrected Chauncey, gayly.
Lang laughed, and handed him Marcia's letter.
"There is nothing in it but you may read and welcome. Your chances are good, old fellow; and I can tell you there's not many a rich girl who would overlook the fact of your being only a dry-goods clerk."
Chauncey was reading the elegant little letter eagerly, his blue eyes shining with satisfied delight.
"You must have spoken a good word for me, Lang; and I assure you I shall do my utmost to be a credit to you."
"Marcia is favorably impressed, doubtless; you know my Ellie told her what a good-looking rogue you were. Half-past twelve! Jupiter Ammon, Harry. I've got to take French leave!"
Lang had casually looked at his watch, and then rushed off, hurriedly, Harry sauntering into the restaurant leisurely.
"I know it's late, but I'll have something to eat, for all that. Old Merino'll be sure to hail me when I go back now, and a half-hour isn't much more than ten minutes."
He called for his rare roast beef, his fried sweet potatoes, his glass of Burton ale, and a bird-nest pudding; ate them in graceful leisure, as if he had all day to spare to the task; picked his handsome teeth daintily, with his chair tilted backward, then called for his check, paid it, and sauntered out.
"Good-looking, eh?" he thought, as he adjusted his luxuriant Dunderberg whiskers by the glass in the little hat room of the store. "By George, I am good-looking," and Lang spoke the truth for once in his life. "There's not a discerning young lady enters our store but that comes straight to me to be waited upon. I've such a way, I suppose."
He walked into the store very carelessly, very indifferently, but somehow he looked up just as he passed Mr. Merino's desk, and met that gentleman's keen eyes fixed on his face.
"Late again, Mr. Chauncey—the third time this week. Another repetition results in—"
"Deducting the time from my large salary, I understand," he interpolated, sneeringly, and then took out his pencil and note-book, and, under his employer's eyes, ciphered diligently a moment.
"It amounts to just two and a half cents, Mr. Merino—this tardiness of mine."
He put away his paper and pencil, and went leisurely on to his place, meeting as he did so a young girl, who stood timidly looking about her.
"Have you any black alpaca to match this?" She extended a woe-worn, glared hand toward Chauncey, who leaned back against a pillar, in disdainful hauteur.
It was not his style of customer—a girl in a red blanket shawl and a green berege veil over her face. And absolutely woe-worn—yes, ill-fitting woolen gloves!
Indeed, not his style—and to match black alpaca, too! He always attended the silken attired beauties who came in their carriages, who wore ganzy veils, that did not conceal their pretty faces or hide him from their eyes, who wore four-buttoned kids, and who ran up a big bill to be sent in to "papa."
So Mr. Chauncey curled his lip, and took the trouble to look around for some one else to match the black alpaca. But no one was in sight or disengaged.
"What d'ye want?" he said, roughly, without uncrossing his legs, or moving a muscle toward waiting upon her.
"I wish to match this piece of goods; it is the Beaver brand."
"No it isn't, either. I can tell the Beaver alpaca as far as I can see it. We haven't any of that stuff you have."
"It came from here yesterday: I would be glad if you—"
"I've no time to be bothered with such troublesome business. I suppose if I were to undo a hundred pieces, you'd probably buy a yard to pay me for my trouble."
"I want a half-yard, sir, and if—"
"Then get it the best way you can. Oh, Miss Vesey, good-morning! You have come to look at our lovely new shades of crepe, I know. This way, please."
He had wheeled around from the girl with the sample of alpaca and bowed with all his grace to a young lady, loaded with costly apparel, who had just come in.
The girl in the scarlet shawl turned around and went quietly out, unnoticed among the throng; her cheeks flushed under her green veil, her eyes flashing angry fire as she walked up Broadway.
John Lang stepped into Merino & Satine's dry-goods store a few minutes before the hour of closing, and found Harry Chauncey disengaged, waiting till the porters should put up the shades.
"Prepare to be delighted, Chauncey; to-night you shall see her; to-night you shall go forth to conquer as sure as Fate. She's here at the Hoffman House; arrived this morning with her mother and Ellie, very unexpectedly."
Chauncey felt his heart leap.
"Have you seen her? What did she say about me—anything?"
Lang laughed at Harry's unfeigned eagerness.
"She's very anxious, indeed, to meet you. She made me promise over and over to bring you to-night."
"Mr. Chauncey, please step this way?"
It was Mr. Satine's voice, the senior partner, a bald-headed, eagle-eyed, sharp-spoken man—a man who said but little, but whose little meant a great deal.
Harry walked briskly up to the private office, a walled-off room, with plate glass and walnut doors.
The instant Harry entered Mr. Satine handed him a sealed envelope.
"Your wages until Saturday night, young man. We dispense with your services from this time. Any man guilty of rudeness to both employer and customer can not remain on these premises. Good-day."
And Harry, with a sudden collapsed feeling, was obliged to crawl out, feeling very blank, very undone, a little mad, considerably disgusted—until he thought of Marcia St. Cymon.
"I'll win her—or—"
"Hello, what's up—anything wrong?"
Lang asked it carelessly and Harry rejoined as carelessly:
"Nothing wrong. What time'll we go up to the Hoffman House?"
"At eight—not later."
And not far from the stroke of eight it was when Lang and Chauncey entered Mrs. St. Cymon's sitting-room, in her suite at the hotel. Lang introduced him to his betrothed and to

Marcia's mother, with delighted familiarity, and Harry felt he had made a good impression there at least.
"And where is Miss Marcia?" Lang asked, after a half-hour.
"A little late; you will pardon her, I know. She has been out this afternoon, and is dressing now."
A second later and, heralded by the rustle of silken robes, Miss St. Cymon came in—a tall, splendid-looking girl, with a cold, proud face, and a singular light in her bright dark eyes.
Harry's heart jumped to his throat. This was the girl he had dreamed of, thought of, for whom he was going to stake his all. Lang introduced them; Marcia bowed, smiled languidly, then went over to the piano for a tiny parcel with which she returned.
"I succeeded in matching my alpaca, Mr. Chauncey," she said, unrolling a half-yard piece on the marble table, and then handing him it with her rarest smile.
"I think you'll agree with me it is the Beaver brand!"
"Poor Chauncey! You might have knocked him down with a feather. He gave her such a wild, hunted look, and then blundered out something inarticulate."
"I bought it finally at Claffin's," she said, sweetly, "and the salesman was so gentlemanly, even if I did wear my old shawl and hat. I do so enjoy a muscadine now and then—don't you, Mr. Chauncey?"
"And he said 'yes,' under the indignant sparkle of her eyes, and then—remembered an engagement and took himself off—poorer than he had been in many a day. While Marcia told her little adventure—how she had suddenly conceived the idea of seeing him first, and how she never wanted to see him again."
Forecastle Yarns.
Among the Cannibals.
"If our first Dicky hadn't been so free with his hands the day he lammed me over the head with a marlin-spike, mates," said Joe Carey, "I wouldn't hev this yarn to tell. But he did hit me, and fer nothin' at all, and I jest made up my mind ter quit the fist chance I got. Ef a sailor don't get a chance, he'll make a chance, and it wain't many days afore I c'n mystick. I didn't go alone, acse Jim Ferguson, him we used to call 'Dinky,' St. Cymon had received a letter from the Dicky that made him sick of the barks, and he went with me."
"We was becalmed in sight of the Maories, one pleasant night, and by good luck one of the boats that was gitting sun-checked was towing astern and I took good keer to leave some paddles in her. We stole a bag of biskit, a lot of nails, two or three hatchets, and made up the best of our kit in bundles."
"The boys knowed what we was a-goin' to do, but who ever knowed a good shipmate to blab on the boys?" It turned dark when our watch was called, and the boys helped us get our dunnage on deck, and when the mate was fo'ward, I lowered 'em into the boat. Half an hour later we slid down the line, cast off at the bow, and drifted away. We didn't tech the paddles till we was a good ways from the old raft and then mebbe we didn't lay in our best licks. We was ten miles from the Islands and knowed we was goin' into a hornet's nest, but we hated that old co'n so bad that we didn't seem to care a cuss whether the Maories made mince-meat of us or not."
"Boys, it were a lucky thing that I took Jim Ferguson with me that cruise—the cussidest fellow you ever did see! That man could do any thing and smaller any thing under the sun. He could hold a lighted candle in his mouth and never flinch, and was the best s'ligh-of-hand man you ever struck. He'd larned me some of his tricks, too, and we kalkilated to 'stonish the natives some 'at, and I guess we did."
"The ship was in sight yet when we saw two Kaupapa—that's what they call war-canoes in the Maories—roundin' a p'int of land not far away. They seed our boat on the shore and come at us head on, howling loud enough to wake the dead, and shaking their war-clubs in the air. You've seed some Kanakas, mates, but you don't know what a real true-blue cannibal in all his glory is till you see 'em as we seed 'em, 'Bilin'-hot fur war."
"Now was the time fur Tim. He stood up on a rock and took a lot of pebbles in his hand and swalled 'em, and while they was looking wild at him he took out a jack-knife, held it up so that they could see what it was, and swalleder that. They come ashore, but when they see that he wasn't afraid of them, they turned more friendly, and Jim went up and rubbed noses with the head man, a gray-headed old thief who looked mean enough for anything. I seed that it were the best card, and I went fur another greasy old skunk, and nigh about rubbed his nose off. That's their sign of friendship, and we had 'em. Foul."
"Then Jim waved them back, and you order seen the cuss lid himself loose and 'stonish them critters. He lighted four or five matches at once and held 'em in his mouth till they burned out. He lit a piece of lightwood and put that in his mouth. He swalleder a piece of the coal—or anyway they thought he did—and I wasn't fur behind him, acse I knowed a good many of his tricks. You never see a lot of fools so completely flabbergasted since you was born, and from that moment we was kings among 'em. Everybody wanted to rub noses with us, but we was on our dignity, and wouldn't 'low no liberties from any one unless he was a chief. Then they took our boat in tow and away we went, honored guests, and they took us to their village."
"Now Jim had been in a ship with a Maori man, two years afore, and had larned a little of their language, and the way he lied to them unuttered salvages was 'prisin' to think of. He told 'em we was a couple of white spirits sent to teach 'em how to fight, and that they must put our boat under taboo because we must leave them when we were called."
"We was married that, a-course, and we didn't marry into no common families, neither. The king's darters only was good enough for us, and you see afore you the son-in-law of King Rudov-Mammal, king of Kantapoo. Why don't you bow down in the dust, you son-of-a-gun? Can't you detect the majesty of this noble brow?"
"But we got tired of it arter awhile. They sickened us and we made up our minds to quit, because when the old king died they was going to tattoo Jim and make him king. We could see that the old chap couldn't last long, and so, one day, when a Kaupapa came in and said that a 'great white canoe' was taking in water about two miles below, we took the chance. Jim told them that a great misfortune hung over the tribe and that they must all go to the sacred mountain for three days, and not a man, woman or child must come near the village. We left a lot of presents for our wives, and got our boat and went for the ship. It was the Sea Mew, of New Bedford, and they wanted hands, and so we shipped. I don't know how they all took it when they found that we had gone, but I s'pose they thought we had been 'called,' and 'at waitin' for us to come back."